

GEORG RUDOLF WECKHERLIN
THE EMBODIMENT OF A TRANSITIONAL
STAGE IN GERMAN METRICS

CHAPTER I
GERMAN METRICS FROM EARLIEST TIMES TO OPITZ

BY
AARON SCHAFER

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF UNIVERSITY STUDIES OF THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY
IN CONFORMITY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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GEORG RUDOLF WECKHERLIN.¹

CHAPTER I

GERMAN METRICS FROM EARLIEST TIMES TO OPITZ

A—INTRODUCTION

The first quarter of the seventeenth century was fraught with great moment for the history of the development of German metrics. Already for almost a century, there had been a vague, more or less unconscious, feeling that something was radically wrong with the metrical technique which had come into being during the two centuries following the decadence of Middle High German poetry, and that a sweeping change must be made. Just exactly where the fault lay was by no means clear; indeed, many of the poets and theorists of the day saw no fault whatsoever, and, consequently, opposed bitterly all attempts at change. But change there was, and that a very fundamental one. And it is for this reason that today we give, not to Kaiser Maximilian, nor even to Hans Sachs, but to the man who laid down the laws governing this change and put them into practical application in his own verses, the appellation of "father of modern German poetry."

Whether or not Martin Opitz deserved the high praise showered upon him by his generation and those immediately succeeding him is a question that will be considered later in the course of this study. Certain it is that, although he was the leading spirit, nay, may even be called the product, of the

¹ The subject of this monograph was suggested to me by my teacher, Prof. Henry Wood, to whom, as well as to my teacher, Prof. Hermann Collitz, I am deeply indebted for much valuable assistance during my researches.

Heidelberg enthusiasts who hoped to do such valiant service in the cause of German literature during the last years of the second decade of the seventeenth century, he was by no means accepted at once as the guide and philosopher to be unswervingly followed. Poets of a tenacious character, who either refused to see the necessity of a change or had formulated plans of their own to bring about such a change, for a time totally ignored Opitz and his school. Even these, however, were gradually compelled to bow to the inevitable, and, in most instances, to admit, grudgingly enough, to be sure, the justice of the demands of the Opitzians. Perhaps the most striking instance of this class of poets is the man whose metrical contribution to German literature forms the principal theme of this study—Georg Rudolf Weckherlin.

In order to understand the exact basis upon which rests the difference of opinion between Opitz and Weckherlin, we must make a more or less thorough study of German metrics, from its very beginnings in alliterative poetry down to the year 1625. The principal feature in the development through these centuries is the fact that the pendulum of German metrics swings from one extreme to the other. The steps in this development are by no means perfectly clear even today. "Endlich aber," says Minor,² "sind auch unsere historischen Untersuchungen" (in der Metrik) "mangelhaft. Ueber die wichtige Uebergangszeit, ueber das sechzehnte und siebzehnte Jahrhundert, fehlen sie leider fast ganz."³ By the same token, so excellent a work as Borinski's "Poetik der Renaissance"⁴ suffers from the grave defect of attempting to work without an historical background. It shall be the task of this study to trace this development, in the first place, and to examine, in the second place, the metrical system of Weckherlin from the view-point thus attained.

² Neuhochdeutsche Metrik, Strassburg, 1893, p. 3.

³ This work was written before the appearance of studies by Helm, Saran, and a number of others to which reference will be made.

⁴ Berlin, 1886.

B—EARLY GERMANIC METRICS ⁵

In entering upon the discussion of early Germanic poetry, this study will dwell chiefly upon the most salient facts in the technique of this period, but will also devote some little space to the opposition of several independent scholars to the "five-type system" of Sievers. The first and basic principle in the metrics of alliterative poetry is the fact that it is "accentuating," that is to say, that *it is based upon the number of stressed members allotted to each rhythmic unit*. The rhythmic unit of alliterative poetry is the short-verse or half-verse; each two half-verses combine to form a long-verse. Every regular half-verse must contain two main stressed elements (Haupthebungen), *the stresses guided*, and this is most significant, *by the normal word and sentence accent of prose speech*. Besides the two main stressed elements, or primary arses, the half-verse also contains two secondary stressed elements (Nebenhebungen, secondary arses), and usually, though not always, one or more unstressed elements, or theses, syllables bearing no stress whatsoever. (I shall return to these statements very shortly.) An arsis may be composed not only of a syllable bearing either primary or secondary stress, but also of two unaccented syllables occupying the time of one stress. This latter process is known as "Auflösung" or "resolved stress." The thesis, on the other hand, may comprise many more than one, or even two, syllables, while, in numerous instances, it may be altogether lacking. Thus, as can clearly be seen, the possibilities for variety in the number of syllables to the half-verse are manifold. Likewise, it is evident that the theses are more or less negligible parts of the technique. It is the number and position of the arses that are all-important; on these are based all the interpretations of alliterative metrics, from Lachmann and Müllenhoff, through

⁵ Although the technique of alliterative metre has little direct connection with the metrics of Weckherlin, it is, nevertheless, discussed here because of its historical significance in the development of German metrics.

Wackernagel, Rieger, Hildebrand, and Sievers, down to Kaluza and other well-known contemporaneous students of this subject.

The names of these scholars have been chosen advisedly. The three successive groups represent three slightly differing interpretations of the alliterative technique. Only a cursory treatment of these differences of opinion can be given here.⁶

The first to attempt to solve the metrical scheme of alliterative poetry was Lachmann, who, in his "Ueber das Hildebrandslied," found each half-verse of the Old High German poem to consist of four arses, with or without accompanying theses. Lachmann's successor, Müllenhoff, applied this theory to all alliterative poetry, with the exception of Old Saxon, while scholars like Amelung and Heyne extended it so as to take in also the "Heliand." But there were numerous difficulties in the way of a regular application of the four-beat theory, and, as Lachmann himself had recognized that not all the arses of each half-verse are of equal strength, later scholars, as, for instance, Wackernagel, Rieger, and Hildebrand, conceived the half-verse as containing *at least* two arses and a variable number of more weakly stressed or of unstressed syllables, known as theses. This theory, while it works well in many cases, falls absolutely flat for half-verses which contain more than two "independent strongly-stressed words (three nouns, two nouns and a verb, noun, adverb, and verb)." ⁷ It was this insufficiency and others that led Sievers to make his "five-type" classification with all the "gesteigerte" and "erweiterte Formen" of the types, so as to make allowance for half-verses containing secondary arses in addition to the two main arses. Although Sievers deserves the credit of having definitely fixed four as the number of members to the half-verse, he made the grave mistake, as has been pointed out by Kaluza and others,⁸ of starting with Anglo-

⁶ For a thorough discussion of these matters, cf. Max Kaluza, *Englische Metrik in historischer Darstellung*, Berlin, 1909, pp. 20-70. This work has been translated into English by A. C. Dunstan, London and New York, 1911.

⁷ Dunstan, p. 29.

⁸ Cf. especially, Hermann Möller, *Zur althochdeutschen Alliterationspoesie*,

Saxon and Old Norse alliterative poetry as the representative types of this technique and of considering the more involved Old Saxon and Old High German verses as developments of these. Thus, taking such a half-verse as

$\begin{array}{cccc} \acute{} & \times & \acute{} & \times \\ \text{maere} & \text{tungol} & & \end{array}$

(Battle of Brunanburh, l. 14.)

he divides it into two arses and two theses. But such a division springs from a misconstruction of the word "thesis." The theses of alliterative verses are the elements that may be, on occasion, wanting; in the half-verse above quoted, every one of the four syllables is absolutely indispensable. We must, therefore, hold, with Lachmann and the supporters of the "four-beat" theory, that two of the above syllables are primary arses, and the remaining two secondary arses, while there is a total lack of theses. The weakness of Sievers' position can also be argued from the Otfrið-verse. Here each half-verse undeniably contains four arses (two major and two minor); it cannot, then, be supposed that syllables which, in alliterative poetry, had been weakened to theses, should, a half-century later, reappear as arses, when the general tendency in Germanic languages at this period was towards a weakening of ending-syllables. Finally, although Sievers traced the half-verse back to an Indo-Germanic scheme of some such nature as this:

$\times \acute{} \times \acute{} \times \acute{} \times \acute{},$

he did not draw the logical conclusions that the fuller alliterative lines, as found in the "Hildebrandslied" and the "Heliand," are the more representative, as they can contain not only primary and secondary arses but also an abundance of unstressed elements to make up the thesis. With these objections in mind, we can employ the "five-type system" of Sievers as being more convenient, for our purposes here, than the nine types of Möller, the ninety "sub-species" of Kaluza, or the grouping, according

Kiel, 1888, pp. 109-41, and Rudolf Koegel, *Geschichte der deutschen Litteratur*, Strassburg, 1897, Bd. I, i, pp. 288-316.

to verse-endings, of Kögel. As a conclusion to this paragraph, attention may be called to the two fundamental rules of the alliterative technique, that for classification into one of the five types "ist überall der natürliche Wort- und Satzaccent massgebend" and that the alliteration "kann nur auf vollen Hebungen, nicht auf Nebenhebungen, ruhen."⁹

A few of the more specific phenomena in alliterative poetry must now be examined. The first of these is the fact, already stated, that the number of syllables (and the meaning of the term "Silbenzahl" will become increasingly evident) enjoys high variability. This is true, above all, of the technique of the Old-Saxon "Heliand." In this poem, we find theses of abnormal length; the same is true of the "Auftakt" (anacrusis)—the thesis element which precedes the first arsis in those types which end with minor arsis (A, C, and D). Examples follow:

"Swollen" anacrusis in type A (14 syllables):

- l. 605: "Saga ûs, undar huilicumu he sî thesaro | cúnneo^x
afôdit."¹⁰

Swollen first thesis element in type B (10 syllables):

- l. 1494: "Than ne sî he imu eo sô suuiðo | ân sîbbiun^x
biláng."¹¹

Swollen anacrusis in type C (10 syllables):

- l. 582: "Thô sagda he that hêr scoldi cuman | ên^x wîscúning^x."

These examples will suffice to indicate the wide possibility in number of syllables to the half-verse.

⁹ Sievers, *Altgermanische Metrik*, Halle 1893, p. 35.

¹⁰ Major arses are designated by the (/), minor arses by the (x), and thesis syllables are undesignated.

¹¹ Indeed, Heyne and Rückert, two Heliand-editors, divide this into three half-verses. They read as follows:

eo so suuiðo	"than ne si he imu an sibbiun bilang."
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The second phenomenon to which special attention should be paid is the difference between the three great types of Old Norse poetry—the eddic, popular and freer type, the skaldic, courtly and highly artificial type, and the “rimur.” As my own equipment, unfortunately, does not permit me to give the results of any investigations of my own on this point, I rely here directly upon Sievers.¹² The gist of what I desire to point out is contained in the following quotation: “Dass bei der Künstlichkeit der Form” (in skaldic poetry) “das innige Verhältnis zwischen Satzaccent und Vers mehr und mehr gelöst wird, ist nur natürlich. Je künstlicher die Dichtungsform, um so willkürlicher wird auch die Satzbetonung dadurch gestört, dass sprachlich schwachtonige Silben zu Hebungen, ja Alliterationsträgern gemacht werden.” When we learn that in skaldic, as opposed to eddic, poetry, the tendency towards “Silbenzählung,” *i. e.*, towards making both arsis and thesis monosyllabic, is already beginning to make itself felt, we have a foreshadowing of what actually did happen in German poetry of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. And just as the freer, more flexible poetry of the Eddas was replaced by the more precise versification of the skalds, so, too, the latter, was replaced, towards the end of the fourteenth century, by the “rimur.” These were poems of a rather artistic nature and, in all probability, imitations of foreign models. The metre here is trochaic throughout (with or without “Auftakt”)—in other words, the accentuating technique of the older alliterative poetry has made way for the appearance of the alternating principle.

Finally, I should like to note one more phenomenon in alliterative poetry. This is the striking characteristic to which reference has already been made—namely, that the arsis may fall not only upon primary, or stem, syllables, but also upon syllables carrying only secondary stress. Prof. Bright,¹³ of The

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹³ Bright and Miller: *English Versification*, Boston, 1910. It may be mentioned, at this point, that Prof. Bright, in a brief mention of William Odling's “*The Technic of Versification: Notes and Illustrations*,” Oxford,

Johns Hopkins University, has applied this early Germanic principle in a very interesting manner to modern poetry. As I intend to make a rather extensive use of Prof. Bright's theory in another chapter of this study, I reserve my description and discussion of it until the proper place for it shall have been reached.

C—THE METRICS OF OTFRID

With these three characteristics of the alliterative technique, then, in mind—the variability of the number of syllables to the half-verse, the availability of secondary accent for ictus, and the development from the accentuating to the alternating principle—we are prepared to advance in our historical survey. The next literary monument we examine, the “*Evangelienbuch*” of the monk, Otfrid, though written in the same century as the “*Heliand*,” shows a somewhat different technique. Here, again, we have the long-verse consisting of two half-verses. But just here dissimilarity sets in. For Otfrid substituted for the initial rhyme of alliterative poetry the end-rhyme of the Latin hymns, with which he, as an ecclesiastic, was thoroughly familiar. Thus, as each two half-verses rhyme with one another, every long-verse is, to all intents and purposes, a compound of two verses. Each half-verse contains, as does the alliterative verse, four arses, with a variable number of theses. Thus, in the following two examples, we have half-verses with five and nine syllables, respectively:

“ Reht ^xárno ^xgizît ” (II, 14, 104).

“ Thie iúngoron ^xíro ^xzílotun ” (II, 14, 11).¹⁴

1914, in *Modern Language Notes* for February, 1917, substitutes for the regularly-used term, “routine scansion,” another of his own invention, “rhythmic signature,” which designates the general metre—iambic, dactylic—in which a given poem is written. He also makes use of this term (based upon musical terminology) in his article, “Rhythmic Elements in English, with Illustrations from Shakespeare,” contributed to a volume on Shakespeareana issued by the University of Texas, 1917.

¹⁴The accent-marks used in these two examples correspond with those

The "five-type" system of Sievers may be applied to Otfrid, provided the proper distinction be made between primary arses (Haupthebungen) and secondary arses (Nebenhebungen). Otfrid's technique resembles that of alliterative poetry in the fact that the final syllable of each verse must be either a major or a minor arsis but cannot be a thesis. But, although here, as in alliterative poetry, the number and position of unstressed syllables is, to use an expression of von Muth's,¹⁵ "gleichgiltig," the tendency towards keeping the foot dissyllabic, that is to say, composed of monosyllabic arsis and monosyllabic thesis, can be plainly observed. This is due to the double influence of alliterative poetry, in which the normal foot, as we have seen, is dissyllabic, or, at least, "zweigliedrig," and of the mediæval Latin hymnal poetry, which was composed in a strictly alternating technique.¹⁶ This is the conclusion reached by Sievers,¹⁷ who also finds, among other things, that Otfrid systematically neglects word and sentence accent, when this is demanded by the metrical exigencies of any particular line. We are, therefore, already beginning to perceive the first traces in the development from accentuation to alternation.

used for the instances taken from alliterative poetry, and are not the ones used by Otfrid himself. The accent-marks of Otfrid possess an interest of their own, but they cannot be discussed here.

¹⁵ *Mittelhochdeutsche Metrik*, Vienna, 1882, p. 12.

¹⁶ Saran, "Zur Metrik Otfrids von Weissenburg," in "Philologische Studien—Festgabe für Eduard Sievers," Halle, 1896, 197 ff., believes Otfrid to have borrowed his technique not from a combination of alliterative poetry and Latin hymnal poetry, but from an old Germanic "Liedform," "deren Strophe aus zwei anapæsto-spondeischen Tetrametern bestand." The suggestion is also to be met with, in other scholars, that the rhyme-verse of Otfrid may have taken its origin from the Leonine hexameters which occur so frequently in the Latin poems of the Carolingian period. I take one or two examples from Ludwig Traube: "Karolingische Dichtungen," Berlin, 1888. (Traube cites these verses not in connection with the Leonine hexameter or its probable relation to the Otfrid-verse at all, but with other phenomena in which he is interested):

"Spissam ceu aranea telam texit muscareæ" (p. 112).

"Caeli ceu per culmina candent extorta fulmina" (p. 112).

¹⁷ "Die Entstehung des deutschen Reimverses," PBB 13, 136.

D—MIDDLE HIGH GERMAN METRICS

When, now, we reach the Middle High German period, we encounter practically the same set of governing conditions as in the earlier stage, with a few striking differences. Here, again, the number of arses is the all-important metrical feature; here, again, the number of syllables to the verse is made variable by the fact that the thesis may be completely omitted and because of other phenomena which will be taken up immediately. In scansion, the "five-type" system of Sievers may be applied here also. A few examples will suffice:

A-type: "Álbrecht wàs vil grímmè" ¹⁸ (Nibelungen-lied).

B-type: "Als ûngelou̯bic ist ir lîp." ¹⁹

C-type: "Ân ir wáetlîchê." ²⁰

Types D and E are comparatively rare.

The main differences between Middle High German metrics and that of the earlier period are two in number. In the first place, that part of Middle High German poetry, at least, which fell under the influence of Old French poetry, admits of verses with real feminine ending, *i. e.*, verses the last foot of which ends in thesis. In Otfrid, as we have already seen, as well as in the purely Germanic productions of the Middle High German period—the Nibelungenlied, for example—the last foot always ends in either a primary or a secondary arsis; in the alliterative technique, it has been above noted, types A, C, and D, regularly end in secondary arsis. The following lines from Friderich von Husen (MSF 45, 1 and 2) are marked by masculine and feminine ending, respectively, in the modern sense of these terms:

¹⁸ The acute-accent is used to designate primary arses, grave-accent for secondary arses.

¹⁹ Friderich von Husen, Minnesangs Frühling, 45, 21. The second edition of Friedrich Vogt, Leipzig 1914, was used.

²⁰ Hartmann von Aue, Der arme Heinrich, ed. Gierach, Heidelberg 1913, l. 314.

“ Gelebt ich noch die lieben zît
daz ich das lant solt aber schouwen.”

Lines in the metre of this second verse do not occur in the *Nibelungenlied*.

But the really significant difference between the Middle High German technique and its predecessors is the fact that the thesis (the arsis, too, as a matter of course) must be monosyllabic.²¹ But this monosyllabism, of both arsis and thesis, is regulated, not by syllable-counting, but by what von Muth²² calls the “Prinzip des musikalischen Vortrags.” That is to say, under certain specified conditions, both arsis and thesis may consist of two syllables, which are equal, quantitatively, to one long syllable—long either by nature or by position. One of the most common devices to facilitate the use of two syllables in either arsis or thesis is “Silbenverschleifung”—the running-together of two short e-vowels separated by a light consonant. The following line from Walther von der Vogelweide,²³ 56, 28, offers a good example of arsis with resolved stress (two short syllables):

“ Sô bin ích gefüege, und bite si níhtes mēr.”

A few of the other means of producing the same result are elision, crasis, apocope, and syncope, into an adequate explanation of each of which it is unnecessary to enter here. We see, therefore, that, in actual practice, the number of syllables in a four-accented Middle High German verse may show great variability. This variability may be still further augmented by the possibility of feminine ending in poets like Friderich von Husen and Heinrich von Morungen, as well as by the fact

²¹ This law was laid down by Lachmann and accepted by von Muth and most other students of Middle High German metrics. It is, however, opposed by Paul and a few others.

²² *Mittelhochdeutsche Metrik*, Wien 1882.

²³ Ed. Wilhelm Wilmanns, Halle 1912.

that a thesis in "Auftakt" does not come under Lachmann's law of "Einsilbigkeit," but may be dissyllabic and even trisyllabic. Thus, as von Muth has calculated, a foot may contain from one to four syllables (the thesis may be altogether omitted), and a four-accented verse may vary in length from four to eighteen syllables; the normal boundaries of the verse, however, are five and eleven syllables. Examples of short and long verses are:

"Cóndwír á múrs" (Parzival 283, 7),²⁴

"Híc slác, dâ stích" (Iwein 3734),²⁵

in both of which all four theses are omitted; and:

"Mich enhábe diu áventiure betrogen" (Parzival 224, 26),

containing twelve syllables, distributed as follows: two in the "Auftakt," two dissyllabic arses (the two short syllables, in both cases, quantitatively equal to one long), one dissyllabic thesis, showing the phenomenon of "Verschleifung," two monosyllabic arses and two monosyllabic theses. How different is such a technique from that introduced by Opitz only three centuries later!

One of the most characteristic features of classical Middle High German poetry, a feature which, in the opinion of von Muth, tended to beautify and strengthen the verse, is the possibility of omitting the thesis after a long syllable in arsis. The tendency to fill out the thesis regularly, to be met with already in the Middle High German epics of Gottfried von Strassburg and his school, was the first step towards the decadence of Middle High German poetry. In the words of von Muth: ²⁶ "Das Streben nach Ausfüllung der Senkung beraubte

²⁴ Ed. Paul Piper, DNL 6. Martin, Halle 1900, prints "enhab," below.

²⁵ Ed. Emil Henrici, Halle 1891.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

den epischen Vers seiner charakteristischen Schönheit und führte stilistisch durch den Verlust der altepischen Composita zur Flachheit, sachlich zur Monotonie, technisch aber mit Notwendigkeit zur Silbenzählung, erscheint also in jeder Beziehung als Vorbote oder Beginn des Verfalls."

We are now, as we see, on the very threshold of the completion of the first stage in our metrical development—that from the accentuating to what Saran²⁷ calls the "alternierende," the alternating technique. The character of this technique is "dass in den Versen weder die Silbenquantität noch der grammatische Wortaccent beachtet werden, dafür aber Hebung und Senkung, streng einsilbig gehalten, regelmässig miteinander abwechseln." It is the purpose of Saran's entire book "die Silbenalternation als Prinzip der französischen Versdichtung nachzuweisen." The arguments adduced by Saran to prove a regular syllable-alternation not only in French poetry but a marked tendency in that direction even in spoken French, it is not in my domain to set forth here. Taking his thesis for granted, I simply mention, at this point, the fact, well known to all students of Middle High German metrics, that not a few German poets of this period—among others, Rudolf von Fenis, Friderich von Husen, and the epic poets—were directly influenced by this technique.²⁸ One indication of this is the steadily growing tendency towards regular alternation of monosyllabic arsis and thesis; another step in the same direction was the introduction of what we understand by feminine lines. Against this foreign element, the Middle High German popular epics, pre-eminently the Nibelungenlied, as well as much of the lyric poetry of the period, resisted stoutly. One of the results of this resistance was the increasing use of a kind of rich rhyme made of secondary arses preceded by primary arses: thus, "slüegé" and trüegé." Such rhymes, says von Muth,²⁹ "sind

²⁷ Der Rhythmus des französischen Verses, Halle 1904, p. 2-3.

²⁸ For a more detailed discussion of this subject, cf. Saran, *ibid.*, p. 102 ff.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

eine Uebergangsform, die sich in der unmittelbaren Tradition erhält. Die Erklärung dieser Erscheinung ergibt sich aus dem Widerstande des epischen Volksgesanges gegen den klingenden Reim."

With a remark regarding one additional characteristic of Middle High German poetry, our study of this phase may be brought to a close. The more important of the courtly epics (Gottfried's "Tristan" or Wolfram's "Parzival," for example) are written in stichic rhymed couplets. The verses of these rhymed couplets are either four-accented, with masculine ending, or three-accented, with feminine ending. Thus, Tristan,³⁰ l. 333, reads:

"Nu dâz der hërre Rivalîn";

and 335, with resolved final arsis:

"Wol drîu jâr rîtter wâs gewesen";

and, finally, 345, with feminine ending:

"Das ér im mît gewâlte."

In these verses, too, we can see the tendency towards regular alternation of arsis and thesis,³¹ a phenomenon which will occupy our attention much more closely in the next chapter of this study.

³⁰ Ed. Karl Marold, Leipzig 1906.

³¹ Oscar Jänicke, "Beiträge zur Kritik und Erklärung des Seifrid Helbling," ZfdA 16, 402 ff., holds that this principle became more and more widespread as the thirteenth century advanced, and that the verses of the Austrian noble, Seifrid Helbling, whose satirico-didactic "Fünzfzehn Büchlein" were written 1290-98, are particularly marked by it. He shows that Helbling's verse cannot well be scanned by the freer classical Middle High German technique, and gives examples of accentual conflict in Helbling, among others:

"Siniu wort giengèn für sich," 2,665,

and

"Wer ein grössèz unbilde tuot," 4,278.

On the other hand, the work of a poet like the Franciscan monk, Lamprecht von Regensburg, whose "Sankt Franziskan Leben" and "Tochter Syon"

E—THE ROMANCE METRICAL TECHNIQUE

The French metrical technique, as has already been hinted, formed the bridge between the accentuating principle of early Germanic poetry and the alternating system of the period we are now entering. In the words of Paul:³² "Eine stärkere Veränderung der Rhythmik wurde durch den Einfluss der romanischen Metrik veranlasst. Das Prinzip der romanischen Lyrik ist feste Silbenzahl und Unabhängigkeit vom natürlichen Accent, abgesehen vom Versschluss und von der Cäsur; selbst diese verlangt nicht immer bestimmte Accentuation." These sentences, with one important stricture which will be made shortly, seem to me to contain an adequate, if brief, description of the Romance technique. A few examples, taken at random from old and contemporary French poetry, will, perhaps, clarify the purport of the passage. Lines 360-61 of the "*Chevalier au Lion*" of Crétien de Troyes³³ read:

"Dessor une coute vermoille
Trouverent la dame seant."

In the same octosyllabic verse (nine syllables for feminine lines) is the "*Roman de Rou*" of Wace,³⁴ from which lines 119-20 are quoted:

"Des que tierce del jour entra
Que la bataille cumença."

The strictly alternating character of these four lines, with weak "e"-syllables in arsis, is faithfully handed down to French

(ed. Weinhold, Paderborn 1880) were probably written between 1240 and 1255, "trägt durchaus," as the editor tells us, introd. p. 21, "den Charakter des deutschen erzählenden Verses aus der guten Zeit des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts."

³² Deutsche Metrik, Pauls Grundriss II², Abteilung 1, p. 935.

³³ From "*Chrestomathie de l'ancien français*," ed. Karl Bartsch, 11th edition prepared by Leo Wiese, Leipzig 1913, p. 123.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

poetry of our own day. I quote a celebrated passage from Rostand's "*Cyrano de Bergerac*,"³⁵ Act III, Scene 9:

Roxane.

"Taisez-vous!

Cyrano.

Un baiser, mais à tout prendre, qu'est-ce?

Un serment fait d'un peu plus près, *une* promesse

Plus précise, un aveu qui veut se confirmer,

Un point *rose* qu'on met sur l'i du verbe aimer;

C'est un secret qui prend la bouche pour l'oreille,

Un instant d'infini qui fait un bruit d'abeille,

Une communion ayant un goût de fleur,

Une façon d'un peu se respirer le cœur,

Et d'un peu se goûter, au bord des lèvres, l'âme."

It is this principle of regular alternation which now becomes prominent in German poetry.

The stricture that has been made and will here, for other reasons, be made is that against the "*Silbenzählung*" theory, advocated by Paul and other students of Germanic and Romance metrics. Though the French alexandrine and other verse-forms are actually made up of very definite and limited numbers of syllables and are, usually, strictly alternating, to say that such verses are mere conglomerations of a set number of syllables thrown together with an absolute disregard of the accent of prose speech is to state the case too baldly and to make of the matter something absolutely too mechanical and inartistic. Probably the first scholar to attack this theory was Karl Goedeke. To quote his own words:³⁶ "*Er*" (Weckherlin) "*folgte, wenn man will, einer Art von freier schwebenden Betonung, wie die Italiener und die Franzosen, die ebenso wenig die Silben in dem Vers zählen, wie er oder die Deutschen vor ihm oder die Dichter der Gegenwart. Was wäre das auch für eine Kunst, die anstatt dem rhythmischen oder metrischen Geiste der Sprache zu folgen, sich einem ganz äusserlichen und*

³⁵ Ed. Reed Page Clark, New York 1902.

³⁶ Preface to his edition of "*G. R. Weckherlins Gedichte*," p. xxxi (Leipzig 1873).

willkürlichen Zahlengebote unterordnete." And yet those who have heard French alexandrines declaimed from the stage will admit that they suffer very little, sound, perhaps, even more beautiful, when read with "strict alternation."

The answer ³⁷ to the vexing question of the conflict between prose and verse accent may be stated in the following manner. If we begin with a definition of art as "the artificial regulation of natural conditions," we will at once perceive that, in such a regulation, monotony will constantly threaten to overbalance whatever virtues might be inherent in any specific art. Thus, in dancing, for instance, a set adherence to and repetition of a fixed number of steps and turns would, if kept up for any length of time, inevitably become intolerable; as a result, skilful dancers continually introduce variations in the figures in order to break the monotony. The same holds true for poetry. I need not expatiate upon the fact that, in the classical Greek and Latin hexameter, the accent demanded by the verse very often conflicts with that of prose speech. Probably nowhere in literature could one discover ten lines of blank verse which are made up exclusively of iambic feet; inversion, producing a trochee and an iamb out of a di-iambus, is a well-known metrical device. And this is the device to which the French poets, especially those who made any extensive use of the alexandrine—a verse-form that *per se* tends to monotony—resorted. The frequent conflicts between prose and verse accent are not all called "inversion"; usually, it is only those in the first foot of the verse or the first foot after the caesura that go by this name. Conflicts in the remaining feet—and, indeed, in all the feet—may be attributed to the desire to introduce variation by a "balancing" of the syllables. This "balancing" is made possible by two devices which will be explained in detail in the following pages—"hovering accent" and "secondary accent."

³⁷ For this theory, as for so much else in this study, I am indebted to the valuable suggestions of Prof. Hermann Collitz, of the Johns Hopkins University.

F—METRICS IN THE FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH CENTURIES

1—*Volksdichtung*

The poetry of the two centuries at which we have now arrived, the fifteenth and sixteenth, falls into two great rubrics: "Volksdichtung" and "Kunstdichtung." The former can play only a small rôle in our discussion because it is almost inconceivable without its accompanying melodies; these melodies, von Liliencron tells us,³⁸ followed the "Mensural-theorie, d. h., die Einführung eines vom Versmass oder dem Accent der Texte unabhängigen rein musikalischen Rhythmus." But, if we do apply the standards of spoken poetry to the "Volkslied," we find it, despite a tendency towards regular alternation, still under the influence of the old Germanic tradition. As Paul³⁹ has it: "Die Zahl der Hebungen blieb massgebend, während die Silbenzahl keiner Regelung unterworfen wurde." As illustrations of this statement, two stanzas, from different "Volkslieder," are cited:

"Wol zu derselben Stunde
 hub si vil heiss zu weinen an
 dass si im | nit helfen kunde
 als si ger|en het getan;
 si was gar unverdrossen,
 sagt uns das buch gar schon,
 si was vier woch|en auf dem schlosse |
 e | si urlaub nam."⁴⁰

And again:

"Mein Schatz, der ist | auf der Wan|derschaft hin |,
 Ich weiss | aber nicht | was ich so trau|rig bin,
 Vielleicht | ist er todt | und liegt | in guter Ruh |,
 Drum bring' | ich meine Zeit | so traurig zu."⁴¹

³⁸ Preface to "Das deutsche Leben im Volkslied um das Jahr 1530," DNL 13, p. xxvi.

³⁹ Deutsche Metrik, p. 941.

⁴⁰ Stanza 20 of "Der Graf von Rom," DNL 13, 114. In this and the following quotation, only those feet are divided off which have either more or less than the prescribed number of two syllables.

⁴¹ Stanza 1 of "Heimlicher Liebe Pein," No. 12 in Horatio S. White's col-

2—*Kunstichtung*

a—Master-Song

Much of the "Kunstichtung," also, of this period, was composed for musical accompaniment. This is particularly true of the "Meistersinger," the heirs of the "Minnesinger." The "master-songs" were not only written in certain definite "Töne," or strophic forms, but were also set to regular "Weisen," "melodies." Here, however, despite the musical accompaniment, we are on surer ground; it can be stated, with a high degree of certainty, that the master-singers composed in an alternating technique which permitted of the most flagrant accentual conflicts.⁴² This is a fact which Saran⁴³ feels to be so well grounded that he does not even deem worthy of refutation Goedeke's statement to the contrary. The theory of Goedeke is expressed in the following words:⁴⁴ "Die übliche Annahme, es seien, um Verse zu bilden, die erforderlichen Silben nur hineingezählt, ist nicht wahr und nicht falsch. Nicht wahr, da kein Meisterlied dieser Zeit durch blosses Abzählen einer Reihe von beliebigen Silben bis zum Reime einen Vers bildet; nicht falsch, da kein Vers vorkommt, der mehr oder weniger Silben enthielte als der ihm in einer andern Strophe desselben Gedichts entsprechende." On the other hand, theorists, from Puschmann down to our own day, have come to the conclusion that the technique of the master-singers was "alternierend und silbenzählend," as Saran would put it, certainly in theory, probably even in practice. The poet, G. P. Harsdörffer,⁴⁵ in a letter to Schottel later

lection," "Deutsche Volkslieder," New York and London, 1892. In the stanzas quoted, we find instances of both "mehrsilbige" and "fehlende" Senkung.

⁴² Even a superficial reading of several of the poems in the "Meisterlieder des Hans Folz," ed. A. L. Mayer, Berlin 1908, will be sufficient to convince the student of the truth of this statement.

⁴³ *Französischer Rhymus*, p. 145, note 1.

⁴⁴ Preface to "Dichtungen von Hans Sachs," Part I, Leipzig 1883, p. xvi.

⁴⁵ Quoted by Saran, *ibid.*, p. 145.

prefixed to his "Verskunst," writes: "Sie" (die Meistersinger) "beobachten allein die Anzahl der Silben und der Reimen; dass aber eine Sylbe lang-, die andere kurtzlautend sey, das gilt ihnen gleich viel." What is lacking in this definition is added by a modern scholar, Carl Drescher,⁴⁶ who analyzes the technique of the master-song as follows: "Das aber die Anzahl der Silben in der That ein wichtiger Factor der meistersingerischen Kunst war, darf nicht bezweifelt werden.—Aber zu der feststehenden Silbenzahl kommt noch ein feststehender Rhythmus, im allgemeinen jambischen Charakters, mit regelmässigem Wechsel von Hebung und Senkung; jede Silbe konnte in die Hebung kommen, der musikalische Vortrag für den die Meistergesänge bestimmt waren, deckte völlig die Härten der Betonung. Ich kann mich der Annahme Goedekes von einer möglichen Verschiebung der Hebungen und Senkungen, so dass auch zwei Hebungen oder Senkungen aufeinander folgen konnten, nicht anschliessen; eine solche Annahme verlangt allerdings ein reines Verszählen zur Controllierung der vorhandenen Silbenzahl, dagegen ergibt sich, bei einfacher Taktierung nach jambischem Rhythmus mit regelmässigem Wechsel von Hebung und Senkung, die nötige Silbenzahl stets von selbst." The last word on this important subject may be given to Paul,⁴⁷ who says: "Je mehr das Prinzip der Silbenzählung durchdringt, um so mehr gestattet man sich Widerstreit zwischen dem Verston und dem natürlichen Wort- und Satzton, bis man dazu gelangt, den letzteren ganz zu vernachlässigen, was wieder durch die Meistersingerschulen sanktioniert wird, indem dieselben nach dieser Richtung hin gar keine Forderungen stellen." And, accepting the point of view of Drescher, and with allowances for a slight exaggeration on the part of Paul, I pass to a much more knotty chapter of our study.

⁴⁶ Studien zu Hans Sachs, Marburg 1891, p. 41. This work was not accessible to me, and the passage quoted is taken from Miss Mary Cacy Burchinal's "Hans Sachs and Goethe: A Study in Meter," Goettingen and Baltimore, 1912.

⁴⁷ Deutsche Metrik, p. 944.

b—The “kurze Reimpaare”

The metrics of the spoken German poetry of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries have proved a veritable “apple of discord” to those who have given the subject serious thought. Broadly speaking, we may say that these scholars fall into two great groups. At the head of one stands Karl Goedeke, who battles against the theory of “syllable-counting” with all the power at his command, and insists upon scanning the “kurze Reimpaare” of this period in such a manner as to preserve the normal prose accent, at the expense of the iambic metre. In other words, he continues the Middle High German tradition of four stresses and a variable number of unstressed syllables to the verse, with optional position, provided only that no more than two arses or two theses occur in succession.⁴⁸ It will not be out of place to quote here Goedeke’s own words, as the “locus classicus” for this point of view: “Da ihre Verse im allgemeinen einen iambischen Gang haben” (he cannot but admit this!) “zählte sie” (die Kunst dieser Zeit) “die Hebungen, ohne sich an den strengen Wechsel der Hebungen und Senkungen, die immer nur durch eine Silbe ausgefüllt werden können, zu binden. Wenn die Anzahl betonter Silben im Verse vorhanden war, fanden die unbetonten eine freiere Stellung, wie im Volksliede, nur dass nicht mehr als zwei unbetonte Silben und zwei betonte unmittelbar aufeinanderfolgen konnten.” I shall content myself with citing the statements of only a few of the adherents of Goedeke. Pilger,⁴⁹ while admitting accentual conflict in the master-song, refuses

⁴⁸ Preface to the “Dichtungen von Hans Sachs,” Part I, Leipzig 1883, p. xvii. Sievers, in a note to p. 134 of his “Die Entstehung des deutschen Reimverses,” PBB 13, 121 ff., calls attention to this passage, and asserts that he is in full accord with it. Later, however, upon the appearance of the works of Helm, Saran, and others, Sievers declared that he had changed his viewpoint, (PBB 23, 458.)

⁴⁹ Die Dramatisierungen der Susanna im sechzehnten Jahrhundert, ZfdPh. 11, 145 ff.

to do so for spoken poetry. His main argument is an æsthetic one. After scanning a few verses of this period "nach sprachwidriger Betonung," he says: "Es erscheint mir undenkbar, dass man jemals eine lebende Sprache derart misshandelt haben sollte." He is led, therefore, to the conviction that the "kurze Reimpaare" were read with free position of arsis and thesis, and with the resultant preservation of the normal prose accent. Werner Hahn⁵⁰ goes further even than Goedeke himself. "Hauptsache der Knittelverse," he holds, "war: die Reime an den Versenden grell hervortreten zu lassen. Durch jedes Mittel, wie gewaltsam es sei, wurde dahin gewirkt, besonders durch verschobene Wortstellung und sinnwidriges Abreissen der Verse. Die Vierzahl der Tonstärken wird nicht regelmässig inne gehalten, geschweige denn Zahl und Folge der Tonschwächen. Der Wohlklang, den die Sprache bieten sollte, lag lediglich im Zusammenklappen der Reimen." This strange theory is made even more untrustworthy by the fact that Hahn quotes, as an illustration, verses from Rückert's "Nal und Damajanti," a poem which bears not the slightest metrical resemblance to the "kurze Reimpaare." Another of Goedeke's adherents is Otto Flohr,⁵¹ who believes the verse of Hans Sachs to have been "aus vier Hebungen; die Senkungen sind willkürlich, einsilbig oder zweisilbig, und können auch ganz fehlen. Der Auftakt kann ebenfalls weggelassen oder gesetzt werden, ein- oder zweisilbig sein." Heusler⁵² gives a slight twist to the theory of Goedeke. He puts the "Hans-Sachsische Vers," "der in Deutschland im fünfzehnten und sechzehnten Jahrhundert vorherrschende literarische unsangbare Vers," in the third of his metrical categories, in which particular category "die Silbensumme des Verses fixiert, aber die Silbenzahl der einzelnen Glieder frei ist." This, in fact, is the technique of

⁵⁰ Deutsche Poetik, Berlin, 1879, p. 99.

⁵¹ Geschichte des Knittelverses vom siebzehnten Jahrhundert bis zur Jugend Goethes, Berlin 1893, p. 9.

⁵² Ueber germanischen Versbau, p. 30. In his review of Minor's "Neuhochdeutsche Metrik," AfdA 21, 869 ff., Heusler expressly states that he is a follower of Goedeke in this matter.

the Sanskrit strophes known as "anushtubh" and "gāyatri," which are made up of four and six octosyllabic "pādas," respectively. In trying to force upon the "kurze Reimpaare" such a technique, Heusler, it seems to me, does violence to natural metrical development. He overlooks, consciously or unconsciously, the general tendency, which had set in, as we have seen, before the end of the Middle High German period, towards regular alternation of arsis and thesis at the expense of natural prose accent. He is not justified in attempting thus to re-introduce a technique which had, in a form of its own, prevailed in alliterative poetry—a technique which had been obsolete now for six centuries. By the same token, we should not, as do some students, argue any relationship between the "Hans-Sachsische Vers" and the octosyllabic "pādas" of Sanskrit and Avestan poetry from the mechanical fact that both have as their basis the more or less regular succession of eight-syllable lines.

From the foregoing remarks, it has become evident on which side my own predilections lie. In ranging myself with those who oppose the point of view of Goedeke, I shall be at some pains to make clear their position. With Saran and Paul at their head, a large number of scholars has taken the stand that the "kurze Reimpaare" are written in a technique called by Mayer "arrhythmie"⁵³—that is, a regular alternation of arsis and thesis without regard to the normal prose accent. The answer to Goedeke's "reductio ad absurdum," that no poet could have written verses with such an outlandish rhythm as have many of the "kurze Reimpaare," when read by the alternating principle, will be brought forth within the next few pages. But, in this study, the "arrhythmie" principle is not accepted at its full face value, inasmuch as it unjustifiably presupposes a total lack of artistry on the part of the poets of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It will be here maintained that the verses of the "kurze Reimpaare" are to be read not so much by the principle of "arrhythmia" as by

⁵³ Die Rhythmik des Hans Sachs, PBB 28, 457 ff.

what may be called "semirhythmia" or "cryptorhythmia,"⁵⁴ i. e., by a rhythm which is characterized by frequent conflict between (or reversal of) arsis and thesis. This conflict is kept within certain limits; it is, for example, generally (though exceptions occur) excluded from the final foot of the verse. When we consider that it is this verse which so keen a judge of metre as Goethe attempted, through his "Faust," to make the regular metre of the modern German drama, we see at once how important it becomes for us to have a proper understanding of the metrical technique of the "kurze Reimpaare."

Karl Helm, in his dissertation⁵⁵ "Zur Rhythmik der kurzen Reimpaare des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts,"⁵⁶ has laid down, in clear and concise form, the theory of "arrhythmia." On the very first page of his study, we read: "Als hauptsächliches Charakteristikum für den Reimvers des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts hat die strenge Durchführung der gleichen Silbenzahl zu gelten. Bei stumpfem Ausgang hat er acht, bei klingendem neun, bei gleitendem zehn Silben. Seltener finden sich Verse mit sechs Silben bei stumpfem und sieben und acht bei klingendem und gleitendem Ausgang." This is not merely a conjecture manufactured in the laboratory of a nineteenth-century student of metrics; it is a law laid down by one of the poets of the sixteenth century, a poet who himself made extensive use of the "kurze Reimpaare," and may, therefore, be trusted to have known what metrical technique he was employing. Erasmus Alberus,⁵⁷ in the preface to the collection of fables which make up his "Buch von der Tugend und Weisheit" (1550), explicitly tells us: "Auch habe ich eim jeglichen Vers acht Sylben gegeben, on wo ein Infinitivus am Ende gefellt, der bringet mit sich

⁵⁴ These terms were suggested to me by Professor Collitz.

⁵⁵ Karlsruhe 1895.

⁵⁶ A readable essay on this subject is by Georg Baesecke: *Zur Rhythmik des 16ten und 17ten Jahrhunderts*, *Euphoriion* 13, 435-45.

⁵⁷ Ed. by Braune, nos. 104-107 of the *Neudrucke*, Halle 1892. The quotation is taken from the Vorrede addressed to "Dem wolgelerten, weisen und achtbarn Johann Drendsch, Landschreiber zu Siegen," p. 4.

ein überige Sylbe." ⁵⁸ "Diesem Prinzip der Silbenzählung," continues Helm (and there is where he overshoots the mark) "wird die Wortform unbedenklich geopfert"; to obtain it, methods already in use in Middle High German poetry—insertions of the vowel "e" to fill out the required number of syllables, on the one hand, and, on the other, the use of elisions, syncopes, and apocopes—were freely used. That Helm, however, has gone too far in his effort to set fetters to the technique of the "kurze Reimpaare" is clear from the fact that the same argumentation might be used to prove that the regular metre of the drama (as employed by Shakespeare, Goethe, and Schiller) is arrhythmic.

So much for generalizations. Upon approaching the individual poets of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, we find numerous monographs testifying to the fact that each of these poets, almost without exception, wrote in the alternating technique, "selbst auf Kosten des grammatischen Accentes." ⁵⁹ An interesting point, however, is the fact that the extent of this violation of grammatical accent varies widely with the different poets. ⁶⁰ Paul Claus, ⁶¹ who assumes for the "Narrenschiff" "regelmässiger Wechsel von Hebung und Senkung bei einsilbigem Auftakte," finds Brant to have been singularly happy in his avoidance of accentual conflicts. Claus, too, takes exception to Popp's ⁶² view that Murner's "kurze Reimpaare" are different

⁵⁸ The sentence is cited by Helm.

⁵⁹ Saran, *Französischer Rhythmus*, p. 151.

⁶⁰ For the interesting metrics of Pamphilus Gengenbach, which cannot, for lack of space, be treated here; cf. Hans König, Pamphilus Gengenbach als Verfasser der Totenfresser und der Novella, *ZfdPh.* 37, Chap. iv, pp. 230-38; Franz Stütz, Die Technik der kurzen Reimpaare des Pamphilus Gengenbach (*Quellen und Forschungen* 117), and Hans König's review of this study in *ZfdPh.* 46, p. 308.

⁶¹ *Rhythmik und Metrik in Sebastian Brants Narrenschiff*, Strassburg 1911, p. 3.

⁶² *Metrik und Rhythmik* Thomas Murners, Halle 1898. Popp tries to prove (1) that Murner attempted to preserve the natural word-accent, but is frequently guilty of accentual conflict, and (2) that he aimed at the maintenance of regular alternation of arsis and thesis, but has many verses containing dissyllabic or omitted thesis. Michels, in his review of this

from those of his contemporaries; he calls attention to the admission of Popp himself that a large majority of Murner's verses "lesen glatt alternierend." Helm gives statistics based on the "kurze Reimpaare" of the fables of "Erasmus Alberus,"⁶³ Hans Sachs, Caspar Scheidt, and Fischart,⁶⁴ to prove that the technique of all these poets is one and the same. From investigations of my own, I am convinced that the "Esopus" of Burkard Waldis⁶⁵ and the "Teuerdank,"⁶⁶ the heroic epic reworked,

work, *ZfdA* 26, 60 ff., opposed Popp's view on the ground that it introduces an entirely too mechanical metrical principle. In fact, Michels elsewhere refers to the entire arrhythmic theory as a "Klipp-klapp Technik."

⁶³ For a brief but sufficient description of the metrical technique of Erasmus Alberus, cf. Braune's edition, *Einleitung*, pp. xxv-xxviii. Alberus stands on a comparatively high plane in the matter of accentual conflicts.

⁶⁴ Adolf Hauffen, in a review of Anton Englert's "Die Rhythmik Fischarts," *Munich* 1903, *Euphorion* 11, 525 ff. (I was unable to procure Englert's study) tells us that Englert considers all of Fischart's "kurze Reimpaare" to have been written in the alternating, syllable-counting technique. Englert finds Fischart's earlier verses to be much more devoid of accentual conflict than those written in his later years. This statement forms the point of departure for Hauffen, who makes the claim that Fischart, as he became maturer, gradually abandoned the technique of his youth for that freer, more "volkstümlich," technique used by poets like Luther, Nikolaus Manuel, and Johannes Nas. Into a discussion of this difference of opinion, we cannot enter here; it is enough for us to know that at least Fischart's earlier poems—the "Flöhhaz" (no. 5 of Braunes *Neudrucke*, Halle 1897) and the "Glückhafft Schiff zu Zürich"—are written in the technique of Hans Sachs, Burkard Waldis, and Erasmus Alberus.

⁶⁵ Hans Kleinstück's "Die Rhythmik der kurzen Reimpaare des Burkard Waldis" was inaccessible to me. Georg Baesecke, in a review of this book, *ZfdA* 54, *Anzeiger* 147 ff., refutes the author's statements that Waldis' metre is not marked by alternation, but by a free rhythm with adherence to the normal accent of prose.

⁶⁶ Ed. by Karl Goedeke, Vol. x of the "Deutsche Dichter des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts," Leipzig 1878. Goedeke makes no reference, in his introduction, to the metrics of this poem. I find that the "Teuerdank" differs in one striking respect from Hans Sachs and his contemporaries, namely, in the fact that all its verses, practically without exception, and including such verses as appear to have feminine ending, contain only eight syllables. If, then, we read the apparently feminine lines with iambic metre, we get very harsh masculine verses. This, of course, is one, perhaps the main, reason for the fact that the "Teuerdank" stands so low in the matter of accentual conflicts. A further proof of the octosyllabism of the "Teuer

in about 1512, from the original draft of Kaiser Maximilian I, by his secretaries, Melchior Pfintzing and Marx Treizsauerwein von Ehrenteiz, belong, with the proper strictures placed upon Helm's sweeping theories, in the same category. But it is around the poetry of Hans Sachs that the battle has waged with particular violence. Wilhelm Sommer, in his "Die Metrik des Hans Sachs,"⁶⁷ carries out, in great detail, his thesis that "bei Hans Sachs kann jede Ableitungs- und Flexionssilbe, wenn es der Rhythmus verlangt, ohne weiteres in die nur der schweren Silbe zukommende Hebungsstelle verrückt werden."⁶⁸ In a review of this work, Reinhold Bechstein,⁶⁹ Sommer's teacher, defends it against Paul's accusation of crudity, and states the position of the arrhythmists in one sentence: "Regelmässige

dank" is the syncope of the "e" in the inflectional endings of words in the last foot, when preservation of the "e" would give the verse nine syllables. Examples from the "Teuerdank" are:

Regular masculine: "Als nun kam dër morgènic tag,
Teurdänk zu seinem diener sprach"
(Cap. 11, 1-2)

Apparently feminine: "Du hättest dann vor gènomèn
Von dem schwein einen leibschadèn"
(Cap. 17, 29-30)

(Exceptions to this phenomenon in the Goedeke edition may be due to incorrect editing. Indeed, these final inflectional syllables furnish the rhyme in many such instances, and often rhyme with stem-syllables. Thus:

Cap. 23, 27-48: "Diesèr baum also èrfaulèt,
Unfalo sprach: "Ach, herr, nun geht").

Syncopated masculine lines:

"Doch das ich noch hab angefangn,
Das ist mir alls glücklich ausgängn" (Cap. 81, 85-86).

⁶⁷ Gekrönte Preisschrift, Rostock 1882, p. 28, cited by Miss Burchinal (I could not obtain Sommer's study). Incidentally, it may be mentioned here that Miss Burchinal is on the side of the arrhythmists.

⁶⁸ Edmund Goetze, himself a noted Hans Sachs student, accepts Sommer's conclusions in his review of the "Metrik des Hans Sachs," *Archiv für Literaturgeschichte*, XII, 304 ff. Goetze says, among other things: "Der Vers des Hans Sachs ist regelmässig in der Sylbenzahl, willkürlich in der Wortbetonung." Vilmar, also, in his "Deutsche Grammatik" (Part II, Verslehre) is convinced that Hans Sachs wrote in the "längst feststehender Prinzip der regelmässigen Abwechslung von Hebung und Senkung."

⁶⁹ *Germania* 28, 377.

Abwechslung von Hebung und Senkung, bestimmte Anzahl der Silben, iambischen Rhythmus, Betonung auch der Endsilben zu Gunsten der Regelmässigkeit und des Rhythmus, auch gegen die logische Betonung, willkürliche Ergänzung eines die Senkung füllenden und die fehlenden Silbe ersetzenden "e"—so haben sich die Meisten den Vers des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts, und insbesondere auch den des Hans Sachs, gedacht." Mayer⁷⁰ places himself in full accord with Sommer's views, but arrives at them by a different route. By applying to the verse of Hans Sachs the individual features of the Middle High German technique, he finds the Nürnberg cobbler-poet to have been totally ignorant of this technique. After having reached this negative conclusion, he shows that the "Hans-Sachsische Vers" can be handled regularly in accordance with the alternating principle, whereas Goedeke's technique, on the contrary, often falls short. Jellinek⁷¹ adduces another piece of negative evidence from Puschmann's "Gründlicher Bericht des deutschen Meistergesanges,"⁷² and concludes: "Jetzt bin ich überzeugt dass diejenigen recht haben die dem Hans Sachsischen Vers iambischen Rhythmus mit Vernachlässigung des natürlichen Accents zuschreiben." Eichler,⁷³ too, admits that he had been converted by the studies of Helm, Mayer, and others, from Goedeke's point of view to the arrhythmic principle. He holds that it was the "Pritschmeister," whose "kurze Reimpaare" were not only full of accentual conflict but were also barren of any real thought, who caused the name and technique of Hans Sachs to sink into such low esteem during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

But enough of testimony on this point. Let us sum up the arguments advanced against Goedeke's theory. In the first place, as we have already seen, there is a steady and visible de-

⁷⁰ Die Rhythmik des Hans Sachs, PBB 28, 457 ff.

⁷¹ Zur Rhythmik des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts, PBB 29, 356 ff.

⁷² The sentence is found in the second edition of Puschmann's treatise, 1796.

⁷³ Das Nachleben des Hans Sachs vom sechzehnten Jahrhundert bis ins neunzehnte Jahrhundert, Leipzig 1904.

velopment from the early Germanic accentuating principle to the Optizian technique of regular alternation of arsis and thesis with preservation of the normal prose accent; the technique of the "kurze Reimpaare" is that of an intermediate stage, the dominating principle of which is "semirhythmic"⁷⁴ alternation. In the second place, as a corollary to the above proposition, the German language itself was undergoing fundamental alterations during this period so that rhythmical values vacillated, and, as a result, true rhythmical feeling may have been lacking, even among poets; although Helm shows himself harsh and unappreciative in his explanation of the fact that Hans Sachs offends far more frequently than most of his contemporaries in the matter of accentual conflict by the statement that the Nürnberg master-singer was a "Vielschreiber" who had no time to spend on polishing his verses. Indeed, a careful study of the metrics of Hans Sachs shows him to have been gifted with great metrical finesse, so that even his accentual conflicts are justified by the fact that they were introduced to break down the monotony which had become law in the couplets of Gottfried von Strassburg and was threatening to make itself master of the "kurze Reimpaare." In the third place, as Helm and Mayer point out, it is impossible to read the "kurze Reimpaare" by Goedeke's technique without often going below or above the prescribed number of four arses. Finally, there is the negative argument adduced by Helm, that most of the poets and theorists of the seventeenth century could not have considered Hans Sachs and his contemporaries the "treffliche Rhythmiker" Goedeke and his adherents rightfully believed them to be, else there would never have been the wild striving after metrical reform which characterizes the theoretical handbooks on poetry as well as the

⁷⁴That the technique of Hans Sachs' verse cannot strictly be called "arrhythmic" is clear from the fact that the last foot of his octosyllabic lines is usually (with frequent exceptions, however) free of accentual conflict. For this reason, I should like to substitute, in speaking of what scholars generally style the "arrhythmic technique," the term "semirhythmic" (or "crypto-rhythmic"), mentioned above. The precise denotation of these terms will be made clear later.

poetry itself of the latter part of the sixteenth and the early part of the seventeenth centuries; in other words, these poets and theorists must have read the "kurze Reimpaare" with the strict alternation upon which Opitz so vehemently insisted, and, failing to understand the true reason for the numerous accentual conflicts, must have found them intolerably harsh-sounding.

Nevertheless, with all this, there still remains the very palpable fact that the arrhythmic theory gives rise to verses which sound exceedingly harsh to modern ears. I am not now speaking of verses which contain one accentual conflict or even two conflicts, for such verses occur more or less frequently in modern poetry; I am referring here to what Helm rather picturesquely styles "Versungetüme"—verse-monstrosities—in which there is an accentual conflict in each of their four metrical feet (and such verses are more than "semi-rhythmic," are, undeniably, "arrhythmic"). In Hans Sachs' "Der hürne Seifrid," for instance, we encounter the following verse:

"Vür dás küníglíché hoffháus."

Are we, indeed, to brand all the poets who were guilty of such lines (and scarcely one of them, from Hermann von Sachsenheim, who died in 1458, to Georg Rudolf Weckherlin, two centuries later, is free of this characteristic) with the badge of inferiority and reproach them for a lack of poetical feeling? By no means. A theory has been offered in justification of the accentual conflicts in these poets, the theory of "schwebende Betonung," or, to use the translation adopted by Miss Burchinal, "hovering accent." It is to this theory that we shall now turn our attention, in order to see whether it succeeds in explaining away what seems a cardinal defect.

c—Hovering Accent

In approaching the subject of "hovering accent," we are again, as is the case with so many other metrical points, upon

debatable and debated ground. Heusler,⁷⁵ after explaining that "schwebende Betonung" has been elevated by practically all students of German metrics into a veritable panacea for metrical ailments, comes out with five arguments which lead him flatly to deny its existence in pre-Opitzian poetry. And yet, one cannot help feeling that Heusler does not answer the troublesome questions: How are we to explain the phenomenon of verses (and even Heusler, I presume, would admit that there are many such before Opitz) which, if read so as to prove accentually correct, violate the metre in which they are written, or if read so as to sound metrically flawless, countenance frequent accentual conflicts? Are we to believe that all the poets, from the end of the Middle High German period to the days of Opitz, were lacking in the rhythmical sense to such an extent that, while attempting to write in a pure iambic metre (undeniably the metre of the large majority of the "kurze Reimpaare" which are both rhythmically and accentually perfect) they allowed themselves constantly to fall into a trochaic or choriambic strain, or even into a sort of "vers libre"? Or, on the other hand, shall we tax these poets with such a lack of feeling for the true pronunciation of their language that they allowed violations of prose accent almost at will? The answer to these perplexing questions (and I take the risk of blame for repeating myself) seems to me to be solely and exclusively this: German poetry of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was all unconsciously, but, nevertheless, inevitably, passing from the accentuating technique of alliterative poetry and its successors—the Otfrid verse and Middle High German poetry—to the accentuating-alternating principle which became, in the hands of Opitz, one of the creeds of modern German poetry. During this transitional stage, the poet felt himself drawn in opposite directions by two antithetical principles, those of monotonous regularity of scansion and of the search for freedom through

⁷⁵ Cf. the scathing "Exkurs wider die schwebende Betonung" in "Zur Geschichte der altdeutschen Verskunst," Berlin 1891, pp. 82-90.

variation, and, again all unconsciously, he had recourse to an excellent device whereby to justify any liberties he might take with accentuation in order to obtain the rhythm towards which he was instinctively striving.

And what was this device (a device, by the way, which is just as essential for the reading of modern poetry as of that of the period here under discussion)? By what means can we keep so apparently harsh a verse as Hans Sachs'

"Zangèn, schermèsser, ùnd blutschwàmmen" ⁷⁶

from offending our accentual sense? How, by the same token, may we experience pleasure in reading aloud those two beautiful lines from the pen of Rupert Brooke:

"Until the centuries blend and blur
In Grantchestèr, in Grantchestèr"?

The device by which we are enabled to perform this feat has already been mentioned. It remains for us to explain it. "Schwebende Betonung," or "hovering accent," appears in two forms—either as "metrische Drückung," the placing of an accentual arsis in the position of a metrical thesis, or as "metrische Erhebung," the placing of an accentual thesis in the position of a metrical arsis. Such a seeming violation of the laws of grammatical accent is permissible, in the opinion of Saran,⁷⁷ because language-accent can at no time be tacked down hard and fast. "Die Sprache," he holds, "ist im Punkte der Gliederung sehr flüssig. Die Worte und Silben der Sprache haben keine unveränderlich feste Schwere, sondern nehmen verschiedene Stufen der Schwereskala, je nach Absicht und Sinn des Satzes, an." In other words, it is possible for almost any syllable of a sentence, no matter how weak, given what Saran calls the proper "ēthos"—character of the whole—to stand

⁷⁶ Das Narrenschneiden, ed. Goetze, Halle 1880, line 132.

⁷⁷ Deutsche Verslehre, Munich 1907, p. 206.

in arsis-position. "Es ist deshalb,"⁷⁸ he continues, "ganz falsch, die Gliederung der poetischen Sprache nach dem reinen Akzent zu normieren." And then:⁷⁹ "Die schwebende Betonung kommt überhaupt vor, wo zwei Verssilben im Akzent fast gleich schwer, meist wohl auch fast gleich lang, sein müssten, wo überhaupt durch starke Auflockerung der akzentuellen Gliederung und durch eine gewisse Verselbstständigung der Silben die Beziehung auf den reinen Akzent in den Hintergrund tritt. Deshalb kann von einem Widerspruch des Metrums und des reinen Akzents gar nicht die Rede sein." In these words, we have, one might almost say, the statement of a metrical anarchy which is very far removed from what Benedix⁸⁰ has laid down as the iron rule for German verse-structure, namely, that the laws of rhythm governing the individual words must be the same for verse as for prose, that, in other words, the word-accent in verse must not be in conflict with the normal prose word-accent. As a matter of fact, Saran himself does not go so far, in actual application, as the above sentences might seem to indicate. He objects to the usual dubbing of the "kurze Reimpaare" as "traurige Verse," and justifies the accentual conflicts they display by the "ēthos" of the poems in which they appear; he does not, however, pardon them in pieces other than those of a satirical, humoristic, or didactic nature. Thus, he finds "den rhythmischen Stil der in Rede stehenden Werke des 15.-16. Jahrhunderts dem Inhalt durchaus gemäss.—Sowohl die Verse Brants wie die Hans Sachsens klingen recht gut, wenn man sie richtig vorträgt. Meisterstücke sind sie freilich nicht durchweg."⁸¹ The theory of Goedeke and his followers, Saran attributes to the ingrained adherence, so evident in the attitude of Benedix and others, to the Opitzian Law that no German verse can be good in which the metrical arses do not fall upon syllables which receive the stress in prose.

⁷⁸ Saran had already enunciated this theory, in practically the same words, in his "Der Rhythmus des französischen Verses," Halle 1904.

⁷⁹ *Deutsche Verslehre*, pp. 208-09.

⁸⁰ *Deutsche Verskunst*, Leipzig 1894. ⁸¹ *Französischer Rhythmus*, p. 160.

d—Secondary Accent

This theory of "hovering accent," however, as set forth by Saran, does not, it seems to me, cover all eventualities; it needs a supplement. As a rule, it displays itself in cases where two syllables of practically equal accentual strength and duration follow one another. But it takes no account of "versetzte Betonung" in a foot containing a strong and a weak syllable—a stem-syllable and its inflectional ending, for example. As a key to the solution of this aspect of the problem, I should like to offer the "secondary accent" theory expounded by Professor Bright, of The Johns Hopkins University, in his classroom lectures and in his published metrical investigations.

In his little volume, "English Versification,"⁸² prepared in collaboration with Dr. Raymond D. Miller, Prof. Bright discusses the moot question as to how poetry is to be read. For, we read on p. 60, "the deviations of the ictus" (or rhythmical stress) "from the word-accent and sentence-accent of prose constitutes an important element in versification." Prof. Bright finds two current methods of reading poetry. The first he rejects in his dictum: "Poetry is to be read as poetry, not as prose," thus retaining the musical element which is so necessary a part of all true poetry (else how could poetry rank among the arts?). The second method, that of regular alternation of stressed and unstressed elements, he finds impracticable, inasmuch as it must inevitably slip into intolerable monotony. He, therefore, suggests as a substitute for these two—the sense-doctrine and the ictus-doctrine, as he calls them—the rhythm-or pitch-doctrine; by this principle, accentual arses which are forced by the exigencies of any particular verse to fall into rhythmical thesis are read with the voice at a higher pitch, while the accentual theses appearing as rhythmical arses are given the stress. This, as we all know, is the principle gov-

⁸² Bright and Miller: *English Versification*, Boston 1910.

erning the reading of Latin and Greek classical poetry; by this principle, the accent is distributed, as it were, in such a way that the conflict (between "prose quantity" and "verse accent" in classical poetry, between verse and prose accent in modern poetry) is scarcely felt. With this as his point of departure, and basing his deductions upon the technique of alliterative poetry, Prof. Bright declares that syllables endowed with only secondary accent are available for ictus. Going still farther, we learn that not only may secondary syllables be placed in arsis-position, but primary stem-syllables, which are, by nature, arses, may, on occasion, be subordinated to them. And then, carrying this reasoning to its logical conclusion, Prof. Bright asserts that, just as word-accent in poetry does not always coincide with that of prose, so, too, does the sentence-emphasis often, and justifiably, diverge; he, thus, makes allowance for the use of prepositions and other particles in arsis-position, which, of course, is possible in prose only under definitely circumscribed conditions.

The phenomenon of secondary accent is most prominent in nominal compounds; in "household,"⁸³ for instance, the accent on the second element of the compound is only a shade weaker than that on the first element. Many illustrations of the use of such secondary-accent compounds in arsis-position may be drawn from the great English poets—"cross-bow," as used by Coleridge, in his "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," "day-light," "earth-born," and so on. But secondary accent is by no means confined to nominal or verbal compounds; it may fall on suffixes derived from such compounds, as "like" in "godlike," "er" in "caterer," "fold" in "manifold," "dom" in "freedom," etc.; it may fall on inflectional endings—on the comparative and superlative endings in "happier" and "happiest"; on the preterite ending in "closeted"; on plurals in "es," as in

⁸³ I follow the accepted usage of designating primary accent by the acute (´), secondary accent by the grave (`). In examples of accentual conflict, the syllable in which the conflict takes place is regularly denoted by a grave-accent sign.

"óversès"; and on verbal prefixes—on "pre" in "prèfèr" (cf. "préférable," "préférence," where the prefix has the primary accent), "un" in "ùnwînd," etc. Finally, sentence-particles, such as "the," "in," "no," etc., are perfectly available for ictus.⁸⁴

e—Crypto-rhythmia

But we are still unsatisfied. There still remain numerous "accentual conflicts" (and those occurring on prepositions and other sentence-particles do not properly belong in the category of "secondary accent") which can be explained away by the theory neither of "hovering" nor of "secondary" accent. The most striking examples of these are those of "reversed" accent in dissyllabic words, such as "Ufèr," "dàher,"⁸⁵ etc. For such cases, we go back to what may be called the basic principle of the technique of the "kurze Reimpaare," that of "crypto-rhythmia," which has been mentioned above. This phenomenon, as well as that of "secondary accent," is a subdivision of that of "hovering accent" in its broadest application. In discussing these three various aspects of practically the same phenomenon, it is of fundamental importance to distinguish between secondary *grammatical* and secondary *rhythmical* accent. The hovering accent invariably lends to the thesis a "secondary," artificial accent. This artificial accent may or may not coincide with a secondary, natural accent. It is the latter of these two that is, in this study, designated simply as "secondary accent." The former, artificial rhythm, or "crypto-

⁸⁴ For fuller lists of secondary-accent possibilities and examples, cf. Bright and Miller: *English Versification*. Dr. W. F. Melton, in his dissertation, "The Rhetoric of John Donne's Verse" (Baltimore 1906), puts Prof. Bright's theory into action, with liberal illustrations from the verses of Donne and other English poets. In explaining the title of his study, Melton says: "The rhetoric of verse means the emphasis elicited by verse-stress when it is at variance with the usual prose-emphasis." Thus, we might speak of the "rhetoric of the verse" of Hans Sachs, of Fischart, of Weckherlin. I, however, avoid this term, as it seems to me obscure, if not even misleading.

⁸⁵ See note 83.

rhythmia," results from the desire on the part of the poet to break away from the deadly monotony of "routine scansion," to which the "kurze Reimpaare," in particular, are susceptible, and to which the courtly epics of the later Middle High German period were a prey, by introducing as much *variation* as possible. However, this variation is employed with the strictly alternating technique as its basis, so that what we get is not by any means the Goedeke technique.

It is this theory of secondary (grammatical) accent, strengthened by that of artificial variation, "crypto-rhythmia," which I intend to apply, with some degree of thoroughness, to the poetry of Weckherlin, as I believe that it will help us solve some of the difficulties we encounter there. By means of it, we may come to look upon Weckherlin and the writers of the "kurze Reimpaare" in a far more favorable light than that in which they are generally viewed. It is contended here that, as Hans Sachs, with his numerous reversed stresses, which produce the so-called arrhythmia that has caused trouble to so many scholars, was merely attempting to remove the monotony which had set in with the interminable octosyllabic metrical romances of the late Middle High German period, so Weckherlin, in employing this same technique, was battling against the monotony which he knew must result from consistent adherence to the Opitzian law.

For the present, however, I content myself with presenting a few examples from Hans Sachs' "Das Narrenschneiden," a "Fastnachtspiel" which I have studied rather carefully from this point of view, in order that we may be able to visualize the statements that have just been made. An example of derivative suffix in arsis-position is:

"Nemblich ein vierteil putter millich" (l. 76).

An instance of inflectional ending in arsis-position is:

"Hettens ein Höfirer dafür" (l. 23),

in which, too, the word "Hofirer" must be read according to

Prof. Bright's pitch-doctrine, with "hovering accent" throughout. Line 132 of the poem, already quoted, is a "Vers-ungetüm," insofar as it must be read with secondary accent in every foot, but, nevertheless, becomes quite musical when read by the pitch-doctrine. Thus:

"Zangèn, schermèsser, ùnd blutschwàmmen."

Verse 282 contains a verbal prefix in arsis-position:

"Mein freund, du vèrsteht wahrlich nicht."

And so I could go on multiplying examples, especially from the "Meistergesang," but lack of space compels me to pass at this point from the discussion of this most knotty problem, and to take up again the thread of metrical development from early Germanic poetry to Opitz.

G—HANS SACHS TO OPITZ

The middle of the sixteenth century found German poetry in the throes of uncertainty, caused by the mighty transition, through the last stages of which it was now passing. The overabundance of "kurze Reimpaare," with their apparent irregularity, resulting from the numerous accentual conflicts they permitted, called a temporary halt to the development towards the Opitzian technique. Three distinct metrical tendencies were at this time clamoring for hegemony, and each of them deserves especial attention.

a—Luther and the "Kirchenlied"

The first of these tendencies is to be found in the Protestant hymns of Luther and others, the technique of which is practically the same as that of the "Volkslied" of this period. In the "Kirchenlied," Borinski believes,⁸⁶ unjustifiably, in my opinion, we have, as it were, a backward step in the direction

⁸⁶ *Poetik der Renaissance*, p. 25.

of the old accentuating principle, "das von der alten Alliterationspoesie her dem deutschen Verse ehern eingegrabene rhythmische Gesetz der Zählung der Hochtöne." Borinski agrees with Paul in believing that, as the alternating principle made greater headway, the feeling for the concurrence of "Hochton" and prose accent became weakened and, eventually, entirely lost, as we see from the harsh verses of the mastersingers. But Luther offered a strong resistance to this technique, and, by so doing, accomplished considerable good for the final development of German metrics. Yet, notwithstanding the fact that Luther employed the accentuating technique, there is to be felt even in his hymns a strong tendency in the direction of regular alternation of arsis and thesis. Luther, therefore, may be said to have hastened, rather than retarded, the enunciation of the Opitzian law. As yet, however, the time had not arrived. "Im Frost der theologischen Streitigkeiten," says Witkowski,⁸⁷ "im Staube der Schulstuben erstickten die zarten Knospen der deutschen Dichtung, die sich kaum ans Tagelicht hervorgewagt hatten. Fast hundert Jahre, vom Tode Huttens bis kurz vor dem Auftreten Opitzens, blieb es still auf dem deutschen Parnass. Zwar gereimt wurde nicht wenig; doch konnten Form und Inhalt höheren Aussprüchen nirgends genügen. Im einförmigen Tritt des Achtsilblers schritten die Verse daher, wo nicht, wie im Kirchenliede, das musikalische Bedürfnis einige Abwechslung des Rhythmus erforderte. Der Vers wurde in eine halb-rhythmische Prosa aufgelöst, die alte Regel, dass die Stammsilben, welche unserer Sprache Bedeutung und Gewicht geben, Träger des Hochtons sein müssen, schien vergessen. Der Inhalt entsprach diesen Versen." In what appears to be a somewhat contradictory note to this passage, Witkowski declares his opposition to the opinion expressed by Höpfner,⁸⁸ that

⁸⁷ Introduction to edition of "Martin Opitzens Aristarchus sive de Contemptu Linguae Teutonicae und Buch von der deutschen Poeterey," Leipzig, 1883.

⁸⁸ Reformbestrebungen auf dem Gebiete der Litteratur des 16ten und 17ten Jahrhunderts, Gymnasialprogramm, Berlin, 1866. Höpfner's views on the metrical phenomena in German literature of the 16th and 17th cen-

the poetry of the sixteenth century was read "mit unbefangenen sprachwidriger Betonung." In other words, Witkowski, while adhering to the theory of "Silbenzählung" for this period, would not scan the "kurze Reimpaare" by the alternating technique.

b—The Humanists and Quantitative Metrics

The second tendency in the direction of an attempted remedy of the misunderstood state of affairs which dominated sixteenth century German poetry was the introduction of classical metres. This new technique was brought in, along with the actual manuscripts of the Greek and Latin poets, by the Humanists. But the result, temporarily at least, was far different from that which had been hoped for. Whereas Greek and Latin poetry had developed from perfection of content to that of form, German literature of this new stamp attempted to travel in the opposite direction. "Das Ziel des Humanismus," says Berghoeffer,⁸⁹ "war Nachbildung antiker Kunst in antiker

turies are interesting because of the fact that they are, perhaps, the first expression of the uncompromising "strictly alternating" theory of the technique of the "kurze Reimpaare." They are, to a considerable extent, invalidated by their utter ignoring of the phenomena of "secondary accent" and "crypto-rhythmia." Of the metrics of the sixteenth century, he says, p. 5: "Die Silbenzählung, welche weder neu noch unbedingt eine Gefahr für die Form war—war allerdings oberstes Gesetz; sie wurde aber nicht so geübt dass die Verlegung der Accente dem Belieben überlassen, sondern vielmehr so dass die Hebung auf jede der gradzahligen Silben gelegt wurde, gleichviel, ob dieselbe einen Ton trug oder nicht. Nicht das Silbenzählen, sondern die in aller Unbefangenheit regelmässig ausgeübte sprachwidrige Betonung ist das Brandmal jener Verskunst." His explanation of the peculiar fact that an age which could produce a Hans Sachs, a Burkard Waldis, and a Fischart, could yet not bring about the necessary metrical reforms, is interesting: "Den wesentlichsten Grund derselben," we read on p. 19, "haben wir bereits eben in dem Umstande zu finden geglaubt dass die Dichtung des Zeitalters—Tendenzpoesie war. Als Tendenzpoesie, welche immer bedacht war, zum weitesten Kreise zu sprechen, hatte sie den plebejischen Charakter angenommen, den man bereits für den deutscher Poesie allein natürlichen Inhalt hielt.—Der viermal gehobene Vers, den er vortraf, genügte Hans Sachs und behagte dem sehr viel gebildeteren Johann Fischart noch 1576, als eine neue Kunst bereits erwachte."

⁸⁹ Martin Opitz' Buch von der deutschen Poeterey, Frankfurt a. M., 1888.

Sprache, die Forderung der Stürmer-und-Dränger völlige Freiheit von jeder fesselnden Regel für das geistige Schaffen des Genies." Of a piece with this is the fact that the science of poetics, founded by Aristotle, did not make its appearance until the palmiest days of Greek literature had long since passed, while the first step in the development of modern German poetry, in the generally accepted use of that term, was the formulation of a body of poetic rules in Opitz's "Buch von der deutschen Poeterey." From all this, it becomes evident that the attempt of the Humanists to write German poetry according to the quantitative principle of classical metrics, more particularly, in hexameters, was doomed to an early failure. Indeed, it is no weak bit of evidence in support of the crypto-rhythmic conception of the "kurze Reimpaare," that these Humanists could be guilty of such flagrant violations of prose accent, and still claim to be writing German poetry. Among several dactylic hexameters from the pen of Konrad Gesner,⁹⁰ the first to write German verses in this metre, I choose one of the least harsh-sounding:

" $\overline{\text{Es}} \overline{\text{macht}} \mid \overline{\text{allei}} \mid \overline{\text{nig}} \overline{\text{der}} \mid \overline{\text{glaub}} \overline{\text{die}} \mid \overline{\text{gläubige}} \mid \overline{\text{sälig}},$ "

from which we can appreciate the possibilities of such a metre. Fischart, a contemporary of Gesner, and, as has been noted above, a poet endowed with a keen understanding of metrical effects, refers humorously to such verses as "sechshupfig Reimen- und Worterdäntzelungen und Silbenstelzung"; nay more, he parodied them with hexameters of his own in which he purposely carries the violation of normal prose accent to hyperbolic extremes.

c—Theorists and Grammarians

But the "Kirchenlied" poets and the Humanists were not the only ones to attempt to do away with what seemed to them

⁹⁰ Quoted by Borinski.

flaws in the metrics of the "kurze Reimpaare." The theorists of the last quarter of the sixteenth century undoubtedly felt that something was wrong, and one or two of them possessed such penetrating foresight that they expressed, in their own words, of course, the Opitzian "Betonungsgesetz," as the basis of all good German poetry. Not all of the theorists, however. Laurentius Albertus Ostofrancus⁹¹ tells us explicitly: "Carminum nostrorum ratio, non a dimensione pedum, sed numero syllabarum sumitur, quarum ultra novem, versum unum nunquam ingrediuntur." The octosyllabic verse he divided into four iambic, with the possibility of spondaic, feet, another proof, if more proof were needed, of the domination of the crypto-rhythmic alternating technique in the sixteenth century. His "exemplum octosyllabicorum" (versuum), "qui usitatisimé nobis sunt," is full of accentual conflicts. The first two verses, for instance, read:

"Merck ein antwòrt sehr kurtz und gut
Die ein glertèr eim narren tut."

The verses which serve as the "Endspruch," however, though by no means free of accentual conflict, are much less guilty in this respect. Albert Oelinger, whose "Unterricht der Hoch-Teutschen Sprach, seu Institutio Verae Germanicae Linguae,"⁹² appeared in the same year as did the volume of Albertus (1573), shows the same point of view as does his contemporary. Indeed, some of the sentences of his brief "Prosodia, Quarta et Ultima Parte Grammatices" bear a striking resemblance to the corresponding section in Albertus.⁹³ We read on p. 122:

⁹¹ Teutsch Grammatik oder Sprachkunst, 1573, ed. Carl Müller-Fraureuth, as Vol. 3 of John Meier's "Aeltere deutsche Grammatiken," Strassburg 1895, contains a brief section, "De Prosodia, Grammaticae Quarta Parte," pp. 150-58.

⁹² Ed. by Dr. Willy Scheel, as Vol. 4 of Meier's ADG, Strassburg 1897.

⁹³ As a matter of fact, Scheel considers it evident that Oelinger here, as in other sections of his book, borrowed directly from Albertus, "und ich möchte dies mit Ausnahme der Einleitung für die grösste Entlehnung Oelingers aus Albertus halten" (Introduction, p. xliv).

“Quamquam in hac nostra lingua, loco versuum varios rhythmos conficere solemus, non a dimensione pedum, sed numero syllabarum”; and, three pages farther on: “De quantitate syllabarum, in hac nostra lingua, nihil certi praescribere possumus, nam saepe syllabae in rhythmis corripuntur, quae in prosa oratione producuntur, et è contra: ut:

“An dich und dein heilig gebott
Gedencken in der leibes not.”

It is clear that Oelinger is referring here to the accentual conflict contained in the word “heilig.” We see, therefore, that both Albertus and Oelinger believed “Silbenzählung” and arrhythmia to be the bases of sixteenth century German poetry.

The first to discern and enunciate what came, with Opitz, to be the so-called “national law of German metrics” were a Dutch and a German theorist, respectively, Abraham van der Myle,⁹⁴ the pupil of the poet, Daniel Heinsius, and the Protestant preacher, Johannes Clajus.⁹⁵ In Claj’s “De Ratione Carminum Veteri apud Germanos,”⁹⁶ we read the following significant sentences: “Versus non quantitate sed numero syllabarum mensurantur, sic tamen, ut ᾗσσις und θέσις observetur, iuxta quam pedes censentur aut iambi aut trochaei.” (Verses are measured not by the quantity, but by the number of syllables, in such a way, however—and this is what marks the advance of Claj over preceding theorists—that arsis and thesis should be preserved, by means of which metrical feet are adjudged either iambs or trochees). The examples cited by Claj for the various kinds of verses and metres are singularly free (for the period in which they were written) of accentual conflict. Moreover, Claj, in the following sentences, expresses very clearly the law of “Hochton” and “Tiefton”: “Syllabae enim, quae communi pronuncitatione non elevantur, sed raptim

⁹⁴ Cited by Berghoeffer.

⁹⁵ *Grammatica germanicae linguae*, 1578, ed. Friedrich Weidling, as Vol. 2 of Meier’s ADG, Strassburg 1894.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 167-173.

tanquam schewa (:) apud Ebraeos pronunciantur, in compositione versus nequaquam elevandae sunt, sed deprimendae: et contra, syllabae longae et accentum sustinentes nequaquam deprimendae sed elevandae sunt." Clearly, the laws of Opitz are now in sight.⁹⁷

But, though theorists had, here and there, worked out this metrical principle, their works were written in Latin, and, naturally, very little read, so that their metrical prescriptions were scarcely, if at all, known. The large body of German poetry towards the end of the sixteenth century was still composed in one of the following three⁹⁸ techniques: 1) the semi-rhythmic (or irregularly alternating)—the vehicle of the "kurze Reimpaare," with frequent admission of "hovering accent"; 2) the accentuating—the vehicle of the "Volkslied," the "Kirchenlied," and such works as the "Fastnachtspiele" of Nikolaus Manuel and others;⁹⁹ and 3) the rhythmic (or regularly alternating)—the technique later borrowed by Opitz, with modifications, from Romance poetry, and found in German poetry displaying the third tendency to which reference was made above.

⁹⁷ Peculiarly enough, however, after having enunciated these laws, Claj, in the last section of his book, "De Ratione carminum nova," pp. 174-79, gives examples of German verses in antique metres—heroic, elegiac, sapphic—in which he wreaks havoc upon natural prose accent. Consistency was to become common property only with the appearance of Opitz.

⁹⁸ No mention is here made of the quantitative technique of the Humanists, which is of little significance and need scarcely be taken into account.

⁹⁹ In this same metre, too, the Middle Low German "Reynke de Vos" had been composed about a century before. Adolf Hauften, "Zu den deutschen Reimdichtungen von Johannes Nas," *ZfdPh* 36, 445 ff., shows that Nas, whose "kurze Reimpaare" are marked by "arge Verletzungen des natürlichen Worttons" (p. 470) also has poems in the looser "Volkslied" metre, with dissyllabic and omitted thesis and anacrusis. The Basel printer and poet of the Reformation, Pamphilus Gengenbach (his works have been edited by Goedeke, Hannover, 1856), though the large majority of his verses are strictly alternating and marked by a comparatively low percentage of accentual conflicts, nevertheless, occasionally allows himself dissyllabic thesis.

d—The Alternating Technique

This last-mentioned tendency is found in the German poetry of this period which took French productions as its model. Marot and the Pléiade had given to French poetry a "new lease on life"; and Germany was not slow to take advantage of this fact. We have already discussed the technique of French metrics (it is to be remembered that I accept Saran's contention that French poetry is "streng alternierend").¹⁰⁰ In order to refresh our memories, I quote a sentence on this subject from Berghoeffer:¹⁰¹ "Indem bei den Franzosen der Wort- und Satzaccent teilweise sich widerstreiten, achten sie nicht auf den Ton der Worte, d. h., den Wortaccent, und infolge dessen auch nicht auf den Rhythmus der Worte, denn dieser ist ja von jenem abhängig." A quite different view from that of Saran is expressed by Minor,¹⁰² who holds: "Der romanische Vers, als dessen Vertreter der französische gelten mag, besteht aus einer bestimmten Anzahl von Silben, von denen einzelne, an bestimmten Stellen, immer den Accent, und zwar nicht bloss den Versaccent, sondern auch den prosaischen Accent haben müssen; am Schlusse des Verses und im Inneren (meistens in der Cäsur und an anderen festen Stellen) stimmt also der Versaccent mit dem Wortaccent überein. Die übrigen Silben sind völlig frei, sie werden ganz nach der natürlichen Betonung gelesen, wie es der Wortaccent oder vielmehr der Satzaccent, der im Französischen vorherrscht, verlangt. Einen ausgesprochenen Tonfall, Versfüsse oder Takte in unserem Sinne gibt es also nicht." My reason for quoting Minor thus at length is, firstly, because many scholars of to-day are of this opinion, and, secondly and more important, because Weckherlin and other poets of his time apparently looked upon French metrics from this point of view. Minor, thus, holds French verse to be, in the main, accentuating, Saran believes it to be strictly alternating. Be that as it may

¹⁰⁰ See p. 13 of this study.

¹⁰¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 40.

¹⁰² *Neuhochdeutsche Metrik*, p. 38.

(and this difference of opinion is not so fundamental for our study) the one outstanding feature in French metrics is the fact that prose and verse accent must agree in the syllable bearing the rhyme and in that before the caesura.¹⁰³ This phenomenon forms the bridge between the crypto-rhythmic alternating technique of the "kurze Reimpaare" and the alternating-accentuating technique, with preservation of natural accent, introduced by Opitz.

The French metrical technique is seen to best advantage in German poetry of this period in the psalm-translations of the Königsberg professor, Ambrosius Lobwasser, and of the celebrated Latinist, Paulus Melissus Schede. Both of these translations (that of Melissus was published in 1572 and Lobwasser's a year later) were, in reality, mere adaptations of the psalm-translation of Clément Marot. Of the metrics of these two poets, Koberstein has the following to say:¹⁰⁴ "Sie bildeten französischen Versarten in deutschen Reimzeilen nach, dabei aber noch oft die Silben nach der Weise der Franzosen mehr abzählten, als nach der Stärke und Schwäche ihres Tons abwogen. Von einem blossen Zählen der Silben kann bei den Versarten, die Lobwasser und Melissus den Franzosen nachgeahmt haben, nicht die Rede sein. Bei diesem fällt überall ein iambischer Rhythmus deutlich ins Ohr; bei jenem lässt sich aus den Strophen jedes Psalms leicht heraushören, ob die Verse darin entweder für bloss iambische oder bloss trochäische gelten sollen, wenn er auch mehr vom Instinkt als von einer Theorie geleitet war. Aber freilich, häufig genug verstossen beide Dichter noch gröblich gegen das *rhythmische Gesetz*, indem sie tonlose oder

¹⁰³ In the words of Jellinek, introduction to his edition of the "Psalmensübersetzung von Paul Schede Melissus (nos. 144-48 of Braunes Neudrucke Halle, 1896), p. lxiv: "Die Nachahmung der Franzosen brachte den Fortschritt, dass vor die Cäsur und in den Reim nur nach natürlicher Betonung accentuierte Silben gestellt wurden. In den übrigen Teilen herrschte 'Arrhythmie,' d. h., kein regelmässiger Wechsel von Hebung und Senkung bei Festhalten an der prosaischen Betonung."

¹⁰⁴ Geschichte der deutschen National-Literatur," 5th ed., Karl Bartsch, Leipzig, 1872. This quotation, incidentally, is an unconscious corroboration of Saran's theory that the Romance technique is strictly alternating.

doch schwachtönige Silben in die Hebung bringen und stark betonte unmittelbar davor und dahinter stehen." If due allowance is made for the fact that Melissus' and Lobwasser's "Verstossungen gegen das rhythmische Gesetz" were rather efforts to obtain freedom through variation, "crypto-rhythmia," this statement is a fairly correct one. The best extant treatment of the metrics of Melissus is to be found in section v (Verskunst) of the introduction to the edition of Jellinek, referred to above. Jellinek tells us that Melissus was the first poet to attempt the use of the Romance technique. His technique differs from that of the "kurze Reimpaare" in the fact that he employs apocopes and syncopes with the greatest discretion. From the French, Melissus borrowed his artistic verse and strophic forms—"vers commun," alexandrine, sonnet, tercet—as well as the phenomenon of "rime riche" and a rigid observance of the hiatus-rule. Melissus' occasional violation of the Romance law that prose and verse accent must coincide in the syllables bearing the rhyme and preceding the caesura is attributable, not to a lack of skill on his part, but to the influence of the technique of the "kurze Reimpaare." For a few examples of accentual conflict in Melissus, his version of the second stanza of Psalm I is quoted:

“Gleich wird aer sein aim hubschen baum gerad,
Lustig gepflanzt an clarer queln gestad,
Daer seîn frucht brîngt beizeit in schönem Wetter,
Des faln nicht ab noch welken seine bletter:
Auch alles was solchêr tut ûnt begint,
Geret ym wol und gut gedeien find.”

An interesting feature of the psalm-translation is the complete scheme of accent-marks used by Melissus. Only one of the marks is of interest to us—the acute to designate an accentual arsis in metrical thesis. Thus, psalm 44, stanza II, 1, reads:

“Dan nicht durch yr schwaerd ist's háerkomme.”

This plainly indicates that Melissus felt the existence of the accentual conflict, and may even show that he was purposely

introducing this element in order to secure rhythmical variation. Jellinek attributes the acute-accent of Melissus to a desire on the part of the poet to warn the reader against false accentuation; however, I feel, with Drescher,¹⁰⁵ that their purpose was rather to call the attention of the reader to the distinction between prose and verse accent, a distinction that was soon to be assigned its proper place in German metrics.

e—The Biblical Drama

Not all, however, of the German poets of this epoch were under Romance influence. A few writers, whose actual literary gift was comparatively small, are of interest from the fact that they were the first before Opitz to make a definite effort—a feeble one to be sure—to avoid accentual conflict while using the alternating technique. Head and shoulders above all the others in this category stands Paulus Rebhun, the author of the best biblical drama of the century, the “*Susanna*” (1535), and of a few compositions of lesser importance. Despite his classical education, Rebhun was permeated with a strong love for his mother-tongue and a deep-seated desire to ennoble it. In the “*Vorrede*” to his “*Klag des armen Mannes von Sorgenvol*,” he tells us that he wished to follow in the footsteps of the Latins “*die sie hatten in metris trochaicis und iambicis*” (geschrieben) “*welchen die deutschen reim*” (rhythmic forms) “*etzelichermassen gemäss sind.*”¹⁰⁶ For the “quantity” of the classical poets, he substituted the theory of the preservation of natural word-accent. His contribution to German metrics is thus briefly stated by Palm: “*Er stellt der Verwilderung*” (here again, we encounter the misunderstanding of the technique of the “*kurze Reimpaare*” so current among modern critics) “*des Verses seiner Zeit zum erstenmal einen nach dem Betonungsgesetz unserer Sprache streng iambisch oder trochaisch*

¹⁰⁵ Review of Jellinek's *Melissus*-edition, *AfdA* 27, 332.

¹⁰⁶ Cited by Palm in the “*Schlusswort*” to his edition of “*Paul Rebhuns Dramen*,” published as no. 49 of the *Bibliothek des SLV*, Stuttgart, 1859.

gemessenen Vers gegenüber." In justice to Rebhun, it must be admitted that, despite the occasional occurrence of accentual conflict, his iambs and trochees are, on the whole, smooth. To obtain this rhythmical fluency, however, Rebhun had to resort to the use of an excessive number of syncopes and apocopes. Verse 12 of the "Vorrede" to the "Susanna," for instance, contains two such contractions:

"Zu *g*fallen euch was lieblichs hie zu spilen."

An instance of accentual conflict in the early part of the play, a conflict, however, which "hovering accent" mitigates, is to be found in verse 6:

"Darumb schweigt still und merckt auf mein wort eben."

As in the case with many poets of this period, monosyllabic words may occur either in arsis or thesis, *i. e.*, they belong to the metrical rubric known as "anceps." Examples of this phenomenon are:

"Gm^ueinlich w^enn w^arm scheint die Sonne,"

and

"Gw^uältig, reⁱch, schön òder ungestalte."

The "Susanna" is marred not only by the frequency of forced and harsh apocopes, but also by faulty rhymes and by the occurrence of assonance. In the "Nachschrift" to his biblical play, "Die Hochzeit zu Cana," Rebhun complains that many of these errors are purely typographical, as a result of which his attempt was spoiled "gewisse anzahl der silben in jeglichem scena zu halten, auch nicht wider den accent zu stolpern."¹⁰⁷

One of the most noteworthy features of Rebhun's poetry is the refreshing variety of metres he employed. His verses range from two to thirteen syllables, in both iambic and trochaic metres. There is no metrical change within a given scene, so that some scenes are composed exclusively of masculine, others

¹⁰⁷ Quoted by Palm.

exclusively feminine, verses. The duodecasyllabic verses are not true alexandrines, inasmuch as they do not adhere to the law of the fixed position of the caesura. One wonders at Tittmann's having found fault¹⁰⁸ with Rebhun's attempt to do away with the monotonous octosyllabism of the "kurze Reimpaare," and one is led to inquire whether this editor approved of the feat of the "unverständiger Stümmler" who recast the "Susanna" into "kurze Reimpaare," and printed it in Worms, 1538, three years after the first public production of Rebhun's drama. This shameless piece of literary piracy and defacement called forth a second edition of the "Susanna" in 1544, in the preface to which Rebhun defended himself in the following words: "Das ich nicht einerley reym von acht silben durchaus gemacht, hat die ursach, das, meins achtens, nicht unbequem ist, in solchen langen getichten ein *verenderung* zu halten und mancherley vers zu gebrauchen nach der Lateiner art."¹⁰⁹ This may not only mean that Rebhun was consciously employing a variety of metres and verse-lengths but may also be a hint that he understood the value of rhythmical variation within the verse.

The achievements of Rebhun were faithfully copied by a group of dramatists of little significance whom Palm,¹¹ with some justice, calls imitators and successors of the author of "Susanna." Hans Ackerman wrote a "Verlorner Sohn" (1536) and "Tobias" (1539) in regular octosyllabic couplets with practically no accentual conflicts. Hans Tirolff translated from the original Latin the "Pammachius" of Thomas Naogeorg into decasyllabic iambics (which cannot be classed as "vers commun" because of the irregularity of caesura-position). In his preface, Tirolff apologized for not writing in the popular "kurze Reimpaare," as he felt that he was introducing, with his rarer metre, a literary improvement and innovation. His verses are "durchweg nach dem Accente

¹⁰⁸ *Susanna*, ed. in vol. II of DDd16ten Jhs., Leipzig, 1868, "Vorbermerkung."

¹⁰⁹ Quoted by Palm.

¹¹⁰ For the following data, I am indebted to Palm. The biblical dramas mentioned in this paragraph were not accessible to me.

gebildet."¹¹¹ In 1540, Tiebolt Gart wrote a "Joseph" in regular octosyllabic iambs "mit strengem Innehalten des Accentus und der Silbenzahl." Johann Chryseus, author of a "Hofteufel," interchanges octosyllabic and decasyllabic iambs, but here accentual conflicts are more frequent. Lastly, Johann Krüginger wrote two octosyllabic iambic biblical dramas, "Von dem reichen Mann und Armen Lazaro" (1543) and "Von Herode und Johanne dem Täufer" (1544), which contain only occasional conflicts. Most of these writers employed the dramatic property introduced by Rebhun, the "ratio decori," according to which different scenes and even different members of the "dramatis personae" have verses of different length, the more solemn portions being usually allotted longer verses. The efforts of all these men bear testimony to the fact that there was a growing tendency, even before Opitz, to remove, once for all, from German literature, the domination of the "kurze Reimpaare," together with their accompanying cryptorhythmia. Rebhun failed where Opitz succeeded because the latter furnished the theory and its application and appealed chiefly to men of letters, while the former reached only the unlettered. Moreover, Opitz's reforms were broad and sweeping, whereas Rebhun confined himself simply to "Mannigfaltigkeit des Metrums und Anwendung antiker Masse.—Gleichwol tut man Rebhun unrecht, wenn man seinen Versuch eine Grille nennt; hatte er doch das Uebel im herrschenden Versbau nicht allein erkannt, sondern auch das richtige Gegenmittel erfunden."¹¹² In a word, Rebhun's efforts were too weak to withstand the "Regellosigkeit" of contemporary German poetry. "Es hat nie bei einem hochentwickelten Volke," says Witkowski,¹¹³ das sich einer blühenden Kultur und eines langen Friedens erfreute, eine Dichtung gegeben, die auf so tiefer Stufe stand, wie die deutsche zu Anfang des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts."

¹¹¹ Palm's words.

¹¹² Also taken from Palm.

¹¹³ *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

H—MARTIN OPITZ

We have now traced, in considerable detail, the transition from the accentuating technique of early Germanic poetry, through the regularly alternating technique of the late Middle High German epics and the irregularly alternating technique of the "kurze Reimpaare," to the chaotic condition at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The stage is set for the appearance of the accentuating-alternating¹¹⁴ technique, a technique which attempted to abstract the virtues of both the preceding systems and to concoct therefrom that metrical principle which, with a few important additions, has remained dominant in German (as well as in English) poetry down to the present day. The Opitzian law may have been enunciated by isolated students like Claj and practiced by obscure poets like the successors of Rebhun. In these instances, it commanded no respect. Opitz, on the other hand, the most gifted and prolific writer and thinker of the small group of otherwise insignificant poets which assembled at the University of Heidelberg in 1618-19, in his capacity as the recognized mouthpiece of an authentic literary movement, was listened to with general attention, when he laid down the laws of the new metrics in his "Buch von der deutschen Poeterey" and put them to practical advantage in his own poetical compositions. But not all of Germany was quite ready for this metrical revolution; a few poets still clung tenaciously to the old order, and struggled against the recognition of the Opitzian law. In order to understand this fact clearly and thus pave the way for a close consideration of the metrics of Weckherlin, we must first concern ourselves with the meaning and context of the Opitzian law.

It has already been observed that the Romance metrical technique was employed to a considerable extent in Germany at this time; it must be added here that many of the poets who used this system approached very close to carrying out

¹¹⁴ A term first used, I believe, by Saran, *op. cit.*, p. 311.

the Opitzian law. In the well-known poem of Melissus, "Roth Röslein,"¹¹⁵ there are only three accentual conflicts in thirty verses. A contemporary of Opitz, Tobias Hübner¹¹⁶ (1577-1636), a member of the "Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft," was, like Weckherlin, essentially a court poet, and put into practice the Romance metrical principle in his translation of the "Seconde Semaine" of Du Bartas (Hübner, too, was one of the first really important German poets to make extensive use of the alexandrine rhymed couplet with alternation of masculine and feminine couplets). "So erhielt," says Saran,¹¹⁷ "am Ende des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts, die Alternationstechnik ihren Einzug in die neu erblühende deutsche Dichtung. Sie tritt bei Schede und Weckherlin als Alternationstechnik schroffster Form auf; selbst der Reihenschluss erhält metrische Erhebung. Sie setzt nicht ohne weiteres die alte Weise des Reimpaars fort, vielmehr entsteht sie sichtlich unter Einwirkung der französischen Verskunst, nicht ohne Beeinflussung durch abstrakte metrische und akzentuelle Bewegung. Mehr und mehr wird sie akzentuiert gemacht"—a task which it was to fall to the lot of Opitz to carry to its conclusion.

Born in Bunzlau in Silesia, a town which then held the position of a veritable Mecca for Humanists, Opitz was early filled with the ambition to introduce some sweeping reform into German poetry. At the age of only twenty, he wrote his Latin "Aristarchus, sive de Contemptu Linguae Teutonicae," in which he declared German to be as highly developed as French, English, or any other European tongue, and protested

¹¹⁵ Printed by J. W. Zinkgref, in his "Auserlesene Gedichte deutscher Poeten," 1624 (Braunes Neudrucke, no. 15, Halle, 1879) appended to his edition of Opitz's "Aristarchus" and first collection of poems.

¹¹⁶ For an interesting account of the work of Hübner, as well as of numerous other poets of this period, in whom strivings after metrical reforms are to be observed—Johann Valentin Andreae, Theobald Hoeck, Johannes Rhenanus, and Johann Oettinger—cf. Hoepfner's "Reformbestrebungen," pp. 28-45. This work of Hoepfner's is a veritable mine of information on German poetry and the poets of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

¹¹⁷ Deutsche Verslehre, p. 310.

whole-heartedly against the introduction of foreign words, a practice which at this time was becoming so widespread. Of interest to us, from the metrical viewpoint, is Opitz's recommendation of the alexandrine and decasyllabic "*vers commun*" for German poetry. In discussing the alexandrine, Opitz gives fifty-two verses, of his own composition, in this metre, his first verses to appear in print. That he had not yet formulated his metrical law is evident from the fact that these alexandrines contain frequent accentual conflicts.¹¹⁸ A few examples will suffice to illustrate this point:

Lines 30-31:

"Das er allès unglück so uns offtmähls zusèht
Ob ès gleich ìn der erst schwer ùnd gedrang hergèht,"

or, lines 41-42:

"Was in der Welt die Sonn, in dèr Sonn ìst das licht,
In dèm licht ìst der glantz, in dèm glantz ìst die hitze."

In this same connection, Opitz quotes a volume of poems and poetical rules from the pen of a certain Ernst Schwabe von der Heyde, an otherwise almost unknown contemporary. In Schwabe's sonnet, quoted in full by Opitz, there are only a few accentual conflicts. For example:

"Ohn Tugent ist schönheit nur ein triegliches bild."

(The theory of secondary accent removes the difficulties here.) The "*Aristarchus*,"¹¹⁹ though it was neither thorough in its reforms nor very widely read, was a convincing sign that "die Erhebung der Sprache und Poesie aus der herrschenden

¹¹⁸ Max Rubensohn, "*Der junge Opitz*," *Euphorion* 2, 57 ff., 6, 24 ff., and 6, 221 ff., incidentally points out that these earlier poems of Opitz were written in the French technique employed by Schede, Hübner, and Weckherlin.

¹¹⁹ One of the few important rules laid down in this work states that final "e" before words beginning with vowels must be elided, and hiatus thus avoided; the elision must be indicated by an apostrophe, e. g., "mein' Ehre."

tiefen Verachtung der Gebildeten das höchste Ziel seines " (Opitzens) "Strebens war." ¹²⁰

Julius Wilhelm Zinkgref's edition of the "Aristarchus" and poems of Opitz, with an appendix containing poetical compositions of the Heidelberg circle and of a few other preceding and contemporary poets (including Weckherlin) is, like the "Aristarchus," significant chiefly in a negative way. In the compositions of all these poets, numerous instances of "irregular alternation," of rhythmical variation, are to be found. Witkowski,¹²¹ confusing irregular alternation with mere "Silbenzählung," erroneously says of the technique of these poems: "Die Silben sind *durchwegs nur gezählt*; ein klarer Beweis dafür dass damals das Gesetz von Hebung und Senkung noch nicht zu Bewusstsein gekommen war; sonst hätte er" (Opitz) "es ohne Zweifel den dichtenden Genossen mitgetheilt und sie zur Befolgung desselben veranlasst." Indeed, it was as a sort of renunciation of these youthful efforts that Opitz dashed off in five days, according to his own account, his epoch-making "Buch von der deutschen Poeterey," which was published only a short time after the disowned Zinkgref edition, in 1624.

Though, as has already been noted above, the "Betonungsgesetz" had practically been stated by Johannes Claj and Abraham van der Myle, it may be safely assumed, with Berghoeffer, that Opitz derived his law not from the direct statements of these his predecessors, but, by deduction, from a careful study of the works of the Dutch poet, Daniel Heinsius. Already in 1621, in the preface to his translation of Heinsius' "Lobgesang Jesu Christi," Opitz says: "Auff den thon und mass der Syllaben, darinnen nicht der mindeste theil der Zierlichkeit bestehet, habe ich, wie sonsten auch hier genaue achtung gegeben; wiewohl derselben auch die Frantzosen offtmahls gewalt thun, von uns aber noch fast keiner, meines wissens, sich darauff verstanden." ¹²² In the preface to his

¹²⁰ Witkowski, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹²² Quoted by Goedeke: *Grundriss*, 2nd ed., III, 42.

"Buch von der deutschen Poeterey," he points to the fact that England has its Sir Philip Sidney, France its Ronsard, Italy its Sannazaro, and Holland its Heinsius: "wir Teutschen allein" (sind) "undanckbar gegen unserm Lande, gegen unserer alten Sprache, haben ihr noch zur Zeit die Ehre nicht angethan, dass die angenehme Poesie auch durch sie hette reden mögen." And, he adds, if he had not accidentally found several volumes of old German poetry, he would never have suspected its existence. "Dann was insgemein von jetzigen Versen herumbgetragen wird, weiss ich wahrlich nicht, ob es mehr unserer Sprache zu ehren als schanden angezogen werden könne.—Man kann auch keineswegs zugeben, es sey unserer Teutsches dermassen grad und harte, dass es in diese gebundene Art zu schreiben nie könne füglich gebracht werden; weil noch biss auff diese Stunde im Heldenbuche und sonsten dergleichen Gedicht und Reimen zu finden sein, die auch viel andere Sprachen beschemen sollten."¹²³ Opitz, thus, sees the need for a reform, and determines to become the "trail-blazer." Of the eight chapters of his "Poeterey," it is the seventh which especially interests us, for in it is set down the celebrated "accent-law." "Nachmals," so it runs, "ist auch ein jeder Vers (ent)weder ein iambicus oder trochaicus: nicht zwar, dass wir auf art der Griechen und Lateiner eine gewisse Grösse der Silben können in Acht nehmen, sondern dass wir aus den Akzenten und dem Tone erkennen welche Silbe hoch und welche niedrig gesetzt soll werden." In other words, German poetry must be marked by a regular alternation of arsis and thesis, in such a way, however, that arses always bear the prose accent. Among the other regulations prescribed by Opitz is one forbidding the omission of final "e" before consonants; henceforth, the "e" of "gesund" must always be included, while the "Roth Röslein" (for "Rothe Röslein") of Melissus would be deemed faulty. And not only did Opitz lay down these regulations, he also put them into practice in his own verses. "Das Epochemachende bei ihm ist die Durchführung vollkommenster Übereinstimmung des Metrums und Wortaccents."¹²⁴

¹²³ *Ibid.*¹²⁴ *Saran, op. cit.*, p. 311.

Opinion as to Opitz's real position in German literature is at wide variance. "Die bloss gezählten Verse" (the old bogey once more) "des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts," Scherer¹²⁵ tells us, "in denen der Versaccent auf unbetonte Silben fallen konnte, verschwanden. Die Wortverstümmelungen, die sich auch strengere Dichter früher erlaubt hatten, wurden verbannt.—Die Reform der Metrik durchgesetzt zu haben ist hauptsächlich das Verdienst des weltgewandten, schmiegsamen Schlesiens, Martin Opitz.—Aber nie hat ein unbedeutender Dichter mit so geringem Recht eine bedeutende Stellung in der Litteraturgeschichte errungen, wie Opitz." Oesterley¹²⁶ takes the opposite attitude. "Er" (Opitz) "hat wirklich die deutsche Sprache auf eine Stufe der Entwicklung gebracht, die sie den übrigen Kultursprachen gleichstellte, wie er auch in Wahrheit der erste deutsche Dichter der neueren Zeit geworden ist, wenn auch seine positive dichterische Begabung geringer war als die von mehreren seiner Nachfolger die ihn dessenungeachtet mit Recht als ihren Meister ehrten und priesen." Whatever one's individual point of view may be, it cannot be denied that to Opitz must go the credit for having introduced a much-needed reform in German metrics—although it must, at the same time, be admitted that his total ostracism of "irregular alternation" was doomed to make for that very monotony which he thought to be the great blemish in the technique of the "kurze Reimpaare." It is in his insistence upon and persistence in the use of rhythmical variation that Weckherlin's value rests. When, in addition, the Opitzian law was supplemented, during the middle of the eighteenth century, by the theory, borrowed from classical literature, that trisyllabic feet might be mingled with dissyllabic feet in the same verse, provided, of course, that too frequent occurrence of accentual conflict be avoided, the way was paved for the use of the dactylic hexameter, in its artistic perfection, in such works as Voss's "Luise" and Goethe's "Hermann und Dorothea."

¹²⁵ "Geschichte der deutschen Litteratur," Berlin, 1883, pp. 318-320.

¹²⁶ Introduction to DNL, vol. 27, p. xli.

VITA

Aaron Schaffer, the eldest of five children born to Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Schepschel Schaffer, was born in Baltimore on May 18, 1894. He received his preliminary education in the public schools of Baltimore, and his secondary training at the Baltimore City College. In October, 1910, he matriculated at The Johns Hopkins University, from which he was graduated with honors in June, 1914. In the autumn of this same year, he entered the graduate department of the university, selecting, as his subjects, German Literature, Germanic Philology, and French. During the years 1914-15 and 1915-16, he held Hopkins Scholarships, while during his last year of study, 1916-17, he held a Fellowship in German Literature.

